



BID NO. 25-06
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
TALBOTTALBOT.ORG WEBSITE REDESIGN

The Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism is seeking proposals from qualified web development firms with extensive experience in destination marketing to redesign the TourTalbot.org website. The redesigned website should enhance user experience, improve functionality, and align with current industry best practices to effectively promote Talbot County as a premier tourist destination.

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I. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected contractor will be responsible for the following:

1. Website Redesign & Development
 - Develop a modern, visually appealing, and user-friendly website that considers the customer journey and prioritization of funnels in its layout.
 - Ensure responsive design for seamless access on desktops, tablets, and mobile devices.
 - Improve site navigation to enhance the visitor experience.
2. Content Management System (CMS)
 - Implement a scalable CMS, preferably WordPress or a similar platform.
 - Enable easy content updates by non-technical staff.
3. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
 - Optimize website content for search engines and AI, following modern best practices.
 - Establish SEO goals and benchmarks for the site.
 - Fully integrate with G4 and utilize the system to create a standard monthly report template.
 - Ensure metadata, alt tags, and structured data are correctly applied.
4. Interactive Features & Functionality:
 - Integrated event calendar. Prefer auto-import options utilizing Google, Facebook, etc.

- Business directory with interactive maps. Prefer Google Places AI with mapping or similar offering for business listings.
 - Flipbook style solution for Travel Guide and other publications.
 - Social media integration.
 - Blog functionality.
 - If any new technologies are recommended to advance the user experience, please include.
5. Accessibility & Compliance:
 - Ensure ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance, with recommendations for additional accessibility features if warranted.
 - Meet WCAG 2.1 accessibility standards.
 6. Hosting & Maintenance:
 - Provide hosting recommendations.
 - Offer ongoing maintenance and support options.
 - Provide staff pre-launch training for routine updates and content changes that is recorded and shared with Talbot County for future use.

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

1. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - Experience & Qualifications – Demonstrated experience in destination marketing website development.
 - Technical Approach – Ability to meet project objectives and proposed methodologies.
 - Creativity & Innovation – Aesthetic appeal and unique features proposed.
 - Project Timeline – Feasibility of the proposed timeline.
 - Total Cost of Proposal – Cost-effectiveness and value for money.
 - References & Past Work – Feedback from past clients and quality of previous projects.
2. The County reserves the right to conduct interviews with short-listed firms before making a final selection.
3. Detailed proposal information will be held in confidence during the evaluation process and prior to submission to the Department. The Department reserves the right to ask for modifications or other alterations from any or all bidders after the RFP closing date. After the selection of the winning proposal, with the exception of trade secrets and confidential business or financial information, all other information included in the proposals may be considered public information under the Maryland Public Information Act, in which case it may be subject to public production upon request.
4. The County reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to accept the proposal it considers most favorable to the interest of the Department after conducting interviews with the highest ranked firms.

5. When the bid is awarded and all agreements are signed, the team will have a kickoff meeting with County staff to review the scope, schedule, and deliverables for the project. In addition, the consultant will review goals, identify potential challenges or issues, and community involvement strategies.

SCHEDULE FOR BID NO. 25-06, Request for Proposals: TourTalbot.org Website Redesign

- RFP Issued March 14, 2025
- Deadline to Submit RFP April 4, 2025
- Interviews Week of April 14, 2025
- Award Contract to Winning Bidder TBD
- Finalize Website September 2025

7. STANDARD PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Proposals that do not address the items listed in this section may be considered incomplete and may be deemed non-responsive by the department.

1. **Title Page (not to exceed one page).** At a minimum, the title page shall show the name of the project, the business name, address, telephone number, name of contact person, and date.
2. **Cover Letter.** Letter should identify the project, briefly convey your understanding of the services to be provided, make a positive commitment to provide the services specified, and give the name, title, address, and phone number of the person(s) authorized to make representations. The letter must be signed by an individual authorized to bind the publisher.
3. **Statement of Qualifications.** The following should be covered in narrative form and organized as deemed appropriate to convey the information clearly and succinctly. Note: In the event a subcontractor is to be used for any portion of the work indicated in this RFP, a complete response to the statement of qualifications by the subcontractor will be required.
 - a. **General Background and Experience:** Size of business, ownership, and location(s).
 - b. **Personnel:** Staff members with overall and day-to-day responsibilities who will be assigned to this project.
 - c. **Capability:** Experience building destination marketing websites.
 - d. **Samples:** Examples of previous projects (including comparable samples) that demonstrate bidder's ability to provide the services requested in this RFP.
 - e. **References:** A minimum of three (3) references with contact information that can verify the ability to perform the work outlined in this RFP.
 - f. **Other:** Any additional information pertinent to your proposal.

4. **Proposal Schedule.** Submit a proposed budget and timeline to perform the Scope of Work described herein. Any minimum financial expectation on the part of the County must be included. Provide an exact statement of the services to be provided within the fee proposal to be used in billing for services, including out-of-scope services. Provide a fee schedule for the professional and personnel/subcontractors assigned to project tasks. Advance billings are not acceptable.

5. **Standard Proposal Requirements.**
 - a. Interested firms shall submit one (1) sealed copy of the completed proposal, as well as six (6) copies, clearly marked as: Bid No. 25-06, TourTalbot.org Website Redesign Proposal dated _____, 2025. *Note: E-mailed or faxed bids will not be accepted.* All submittals received after 10 a.m. on April 4, 2025 will be returned unopened. Incomplete or untimely bids will not be considered. It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure that their bid proposal is complete and submitted in a timely manner. The County assumes no responsibility to notify bidders of incomplete or untimely bids.

 - b. No oral changes will be made to the proposal documents. Addenda will be issued when questions arise which might affect the proposals or the course of contracted work. The County will make certain that all known bidders receive any addenda via fax, first-class mail, e-mail, or by hand. If an addendum is issued less than five (5) working days before the time for receipt of proposals, the addendum will provide for a new proposal date, which will be at least five (5) working days after the normal receipt of the addendum by the prospective bidder. Receipt of addenda by the bidder must be acknowledged as part of the proposal.

 - c. Any proposal may be withdrawn prior to the RFP deadline or authorized postponement thereof. Any proposal received after the time and date specified for the bid opening shall not be considered and will be returned unopened. No bidder may withdraw a proposal within 60 days after the actual date of the opening thereof. Should there be reasons why the work cannot be awarded within the specific period, the time may be extended by mutual agreement between the Department and the bidder.

VI. GENERAL CONTRACT INFORMATION

1. **Contract Approval.** Following review of proposal summaries and consideration of staff recommendations, the County anticipates the awarding of a contract for the project. The County assumes no responsibility for work done, even in good faith, prior to approval of the contract and final negotiations.

2. **Proposal as Part of the Contract.** The successful proposal will become an integral part of the contract, and its contents may become obligations if deemed necessary by Talbot County, Maryland. It shall not, however, be considered the total binding

obligation. Those conditions shall be inclusive of a final negotiated and approved contract. Failure of the successful bidder to accept these obligations may result in cancellation of the award.

3. **Costs.** In the event a formal contract is entered into between the County and a bidder, all costs proposed for the provision of the specified services must be firm for the period of the proposed contract.
4. **Changes of Key Members.** The County reserves the right to approve any change in the successful bidder's project team members whose participation in the project is specifically offered in the proposal. This is to ensure that the prime contractor does not arbitrarily remove persons with vital experience and skill from the project.
5. **News Releases.** News releases pertaining to this request, the service, study, or project to which it relates shall not be made without prior approval by, and then only in cooperation with, the Department.
6. **Independent Price Determination.** By submission of a proposal, the bidder certifies that the prices in the proposal have been arrived at independently and without consultation, communication, or agreement with other respondents.
7. **Rejection of Work.** The successful bidder shall be responsible for the quality, accuracy, and proper performance of the work identified in the contract. The County may reject any work found to be defective or not in accordance with the specifications contained in the RFP, proposal, and resulting contract, regardless of the state of completion and the time or place the error was discovered. The County may also reject defective work that was previously approved because of an oversight during inspection/approval.
8. **Ownership of Documents.** All designs, drawings, logos, specifications, notes, artwork, photographs, digitized information, and other work developed in the performance of the contract are produced for hire, will remain the sole property of the County, and may be used by the Department for any other purpose without additional compensation to the Contractor. The Contractor agrees not to assert any rights and not to establish any claim under the design patent or copyright laws. All digitized information, film negatives, and hard copies related to the Strategic Plan should be turned over to the Department within ninety (90) days after final payment under this contract.

V. CONTRACT AWARD

1. The bidder receiving the notice of award shall be required to provide insurance in a form and amount acceptable to the County, which insurance shall name "Talbot County, Maryland, a political subdivision of the State of Maryland" as an additional insured. Proof of such insurance shall be required prior to project launch.

2. The bidder to whom the work is awarded shall be required to execute an agreement within ten (10) calendar days from the date when notice of award is delivered to the bidder. In case of failure of the bidder to execute the agreement, the County may consider the bidder in default and disqualify the bidder from the project and award the work to the next lowest, or most qualified, bidder.
3. Upon receipt of the agreement signed by the party to whom the agreement was awarded, the County shall sign the agreement and return to such party an executed duplicate of the agreement.

VI. CONTRACT PERIOD

1. Following contract award, all parties shall sign a contract and the contractor will be given a Notice to Proceed that will include a final product delivery date.
2. The Notice to Proceed shall be issued by the County once the agreement has been executed by both parties. Either party may cancel the written contract by giving a minimum 10-day notice, in writing, to the other party.

SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

Sealed bids MUST be delivered to:

Office of the Talbot County Manager
Courthouse, South Wing
11 North Washington Street
Easton, MD 21601

Deadline:

**April 4, 2025
10 a.m.**

Envelopes MUST be marked: **"Bid No. 25-06 "TourTalbot.org Website Redesign"** in the lower left corner.

** Proposals not received by the time and at the place indicated will not be considered and will be returned unopened.*

The following should be included in the proposal:

- An original and six (6) copies of the proposal.

- Date.
- Service provider name.
- Contact name.
- Phone numbers.
- Resumes of principal and working team.
- Concise description of the services proposed for the work.
- Estimated costs of services and total project costs.
- Description of experience with at least three (3) examples of similar efforts.
- At least three (3) references for similar projects.
- A master schedule that includes milestones, reviews, and delivery dates.
- *NOTE: E-mailed or faxed bids will not be accepted.*

INQUIRIES CONCERNING THIS PROPOSAL

Please direct any questions or comments to:

Cassandra M. Vanhooser
Director, Economic Development and Tourism
Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism
215 Bay Street, Suite 5
Easton, MD 21601

Email: cvanhooser@talbotcountymd.gov

Telephone: 410-770-8000

*The County Council of Talbot County reserves the right to accept or reject, in whole or in part, any and all proposals received in response to this **Request for Proposal**, to waive or permit cure of minor irregularities; and to conduct discussions with any or all qualified Service Providers in any manner necessary to serve the best interests of the County. This Request for Proposal creates no obligation on the part of the County to award a contract.*

Request for Proposal Summary

Project: TourTalbot.org Website Redesign

Total Cost of Project \$ _____

Please submit additional information on the services you will provide as an attachment.

To be considered, please submit sealed bid by: _____ on _____, _____, 2025

Office of the Talbot County Manager
Courthouse, South Wing
11 North Washington Street
Easton, MD 21601

Envelopes MUST be marked: "**Bid No. 25-06, TourTalbot.org Website Redesign**"
in the lower left corner.

*Proposals not received by the time and at the place indicated will
not be considered and will be returned unopened*

Company Name

Contact Name Telephone

Signature Date

Your signature will guarantee the proposed quote will be effective for 120 days.

TALBOT COUNTY BID FORM
BID NO. 25-06

Talbot County Manager
Talbot County Courthouse
11 N. Washington Street, Suite 13
Easton, Maryland 21601

TITLE: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: TourTalbot.org Website Redesign

OPENING: April 4, 2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

Proposal of _____ (hereinafter called "BIDDER"), organized and existing under the laws of the State of _____ doing business as _____*. BIDDER hereby submits proposal for the above-titled project. Having carefully examined the specifications and drawings for the named project and, having received clarification on all items of conflict or upon which any doubt arose, the undersigned hereby agree(s) to furnish all labor, material, and equipment required for complete work in strict accordance with the contract documents. BIDDER also understands that the County Director of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism or her assignee has the right to delete any portion of the work herein described, and BIDDER shall perform the other approved items of the contract accordingly. BIDDER acknowledges receipt of the following addenda:

BIDDER hereby agrees to perform all the work described in the specifications and shown on the plans for the stipulated sum of:

TOTAL BASE BID:

_____ DOLLARS (\$ _____)
(WRITTEN) (FIGURES)

TOTAL SUPPLEMENTAL BID REQUEST #1:

_____ DOLLARS (\$ _____)
(WRITTEN) (FIGURES)

NOTE: Bids shall include sales tax and all other applicable taxes and fees.

*Insert "a corporation," "a partnership," or "an individual" as applicable.

SIGN FOR IDENTIFICATION:

AFFIDAVIT I
BID NO. 25-06

TALBOT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
215 BAY STREET, SUITE 5
EASTON, MARYLAND 21601

COUNTY OF _____

STATE OF _____

Before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public, in and for the County and State aforesaid, personally appeared _____ and made oath in due form of law that the Proposer herein, his agents, servants and/or employees, to the best of his/her knowledge and belief, have not in any way colluded with anyone for and on behalf of the Proposer, or themselves, or obtain information that would give the Proposer an unfair advantage over others, nor have they colluded with anyone for and on behalf of the Proposer, or themselves, to gain any favoritism in the award of the Contract herein.

Notary Public

SIGN FOR IDENTIFICATION

AFFIDAVIT II
BID NO. 25-06

TALBOT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
215 BAY STREET, SUITE 5
EASTON, MARYLAND 21601

**DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST BY PERSONS DOING BUSINESS WITH TALBOT COUNTY,
MARYLAND**

The undersigned does hereby declare that no officer or employee of Talbot County, Maryland (the "County"), whether elected or appointed, has in any manner whatsoever any interest in or has received prior to, hereto, or will receive subsequent hereto, any benefit, monetary or material consideration from the profits or emoluments of this contract, job, work or service for the County. No officer or employee has accepted, or received, or will receive, directly or indirectly, any part of any fee, commission or other compensation paid or payable by the County in connection with this contract, job, work or service for the County excepting, however, the receipt of dividends on corporation stock.

I/We do solemnly declare and affirm under the penalties of perjury that the contents of the foregoing affidavit are true and correct to the best of my/our knowledge, information and belief.

DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____ TITLE _____

PRINTED NAME & TITLE _____

FIRM _____

ADDRESS _____

SIGN FOR IDENTIFICATION