Open Data Portal and Content Management System
Request for Proposals
Questions and Answers: March 14, 2017

1. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this?
   Yes.

2. Whether we need to come over there for meetings?
   Yes.

3. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA?
   No.

4. Can we submit the proposals via email?
   No (Submission of proposals via telephone, facsimile, e-mail or any other method not specifically provided herein is prohibited).

5. Approximately how many people will attend the training classes? Please break down by administrator vs. content creator / editor.
   8 to 10 Administrators and 15-20 Content/Editors

6. What CMS' do the administrators have previous experience with?
   In terms of open data, the city has no experience. Our current website is Quantum CMS.

7. What CMS is the new city site being built on?
   Contract has not been awarded.

8. Can you confirm that this is a fixed fee bid?
   Yes. The fixed fee bid should encompass everything required in the RFP. Any changes agreed upon by both parties would require a change in cost.

9. If we are proposing to host the application with a 3rd party hosting provider, does the network security and privacy insurance need to be provided by us, or the hosting provider?
   Network security and privacy insurance need to be provided by primary vendor.

10. For the living wage form, is software development / web design considered a professional service?
    Yes.

11. Is there a target launch date? Is it tied to an event or some sort of date deadline like a fiscal year?
    Yes. No.

12. Has a similar RFP been issued for this website (or similar project) within the last 3 years? If previous bid information is requested from procurement, are there any regulations preventing that bid information from being disclosed?
    No.

13. Is there any preference for local vendors?
    Yes.

14. Can you provide an idea of the expected budget for this project?
    No.

15. Do you expect to do any internal development on the open data portal?
    To be determined. It is preferred that the product has an API to entertain that option in the future.

16. Are there multi-lingual requirements for the site? If so, is Google Translate sufficient?
    That option would be preferred. Yes.

17. Will site search need to index pdf / Word docs?
    Yes.

18. What is the vendor's role with respect to loading data into the site?
    Vendor will be responsible for uploading all data during the implementation phase.

19. Is all data planned for inclusion in the site being provided in a structured format (CSV / XML / XLS / etc.)
    No.

20. How much data do you expect to be loaded for site launch?
    To be determined.

21. Can you provide examples of a few open data sites that are good models for what you want to achieve with the Buffalo open data portal?
    No.

22. Please confirm that awarded vendor will primarily perform development and consulting remotely.
    Vendor can work remotely, but we are expecting onsite engagement as well.

23. Are there any restrictions concerning employees located outside of CONUS?
    No.

24. Should travel costs to your site for meetings be built into the bid, or is it billable separately once we are under contract?
    Yes. All costs should be built into the bid.

25. In *Project Component 2. Company Profile* there is a requirement to provide resumes of personnel. This same requirement is repeated nearly verbatim in *Project Component 5. Dedicated Resources*. Will the City clarify in which component they would like resumes included? Would the City like resumes to be included in both sections?

    Put project team resumes in Component 5.

26. The contract is modeled as a Time and Materials Services contract, but the services requested seem more like Subscription-based Software products. Is the City open to considering a contract model that would incorporate subscription-based Software contracts (Software-as-a-Service, "SaaS")?

    Yes.

27. Can you elaborate on the requirements for the fee structure? In particular, do you expect vendors to document their expected costs and give the City the margin they will bill on top of costs?

   Your expected costs should be documented. The bid is a fixed price, so there is no margin.

28. If you require vendors to document costs, and bill at a rate above the documented costs, you are essentially locking pricing models into Time and Materials services pricing, given that the solution the City is looking for will likely be Software-as-a-Service and priced on a subscription model, if the City was originally looking for vendors to document costs and margins, will the City reconsider allowing for vendors to price their products as a subscription-based model in which documented costs do not affect the subscription price?

   Please respond with your preferred pricing model.

29. When the RFP refers to "*billing rates*" is it referring to the hourly rate of the resource or the rate *on top of* the cost of that resource?

   The question is unclear. Please respond with your preferred pricing model.

30. You have a requirement for 99.99% uptime in the RFP. Uptime of *99.9%* is the industry-standard for Software products and results in less than 9 hours of total downtime per year. To maintain 99.99% uptime, a difference of only about 7 hours per year, is very costly to vendors and these costs are passed along to the customer. Would you consider changing the requirement from 99.99% uptime to 99.9% uptime?

   We are looking for a high uptime. Please respond with how much uptime you can offer. We will consider all uptime rates.

31. On page 20, requirement 5.49 references requirement 5.29, but 5.29 does not concern "*passwords, users, or subscriptions*". To what requirement does the City mean to refer to in this question?

   5.49 should be referencing 5.48 instead of 5.29.

32. Are certificates of insurance needed before the submission of the RFP or simply before a contract can be signed?

   Before the contract is awarded.

33. Most Open Data platforms have lightweight CMS functions and can integrate with Drupal/Wordpress/ in the core of their products. Would the city prefer for the ability of its Open Data portal to integrate/enable CMS functionality? Alternatively, are you looking for a full-fledged partnership with a Content Management provider with light Open Data capabilities?

   Our CMS platforms are not Drupal or Wordpress, but we would like there to be a relationship with the content management provider.

34. During our research, we found this RFP (http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/city_departments/Purchasing/Website.pdf) which is a full-fledged CMS RFP. On 5.29, "*Integration with City's public-facing website*" is required. Is the intent of this RFP to integrate a data portal with the CMS selected for the previous RFP? Was this CMS RFP awarded? If so, what CMS was selected by the City? Or is Quantum CMS still the City's current CMS?

At this point, an integration with the public website is not dependent on the launch of the open data website. The award is not final. We are still using Quantum CMS.

35. Will the Open Data product and the Content Management System have separate URLs?

     It would be under the same domain.

36. As Open Data Management systems become seen as part of critical infrastructure rather than stand-alone "Transparency" Portals, municipalities often desire the underlying technology to maintain as much flexibility as possible to be able to pivot to new technologies as they are released. Does the City of Buffalo want its underlying Open Data technology to be flexible to integrating with as many CMS systems as possible?

     Yes.

37. Does the City's branding project team have existing style guide that we can leverage?

     Yes.

38. In section 3.1 Project Goals, the 2nd overall goal is "*an open-source platform, which leverages developers around the globe to constantly update and improve the core platform.*" What metrics will the City use to measure the robustness of the proposed open-source platform? There are several open-source projects that have minimal third-party involvement and extensions. Will Github stats be used to measure the vitality of the open source platform? Typically the Key Performance indicators to measure any Open Source community are number of third-party contributors, age of the project, and number of deployments.

     To be determined.

39. In section 3.1, the 8th goal calls for "robust reporting and analytics." Does the City plan to deploy financial transparency and intelligence solutions as part of the open data initiative beyond just publishing the raw financial data on the portal?

     To be determined, dependent on proposals received.

40. In addition, is there a requirement for detailed server analytics entailing access to the webserver logfile? Most solutions only offer high-level usage analytics and limit access to this logfile.

     No, there is no requirement, but is preferred.

41. Section 5.32 states *"Portal acts as a central database for the City's data"*; does the City require the ability to treat the portal as infrastructure that can support complex queries, using non-proprietary APIs and standard SQL?

     No, there is no requirement, but is preferred.

42. Section 5.92 states, *"Solution shows a commitment to constant improvement and iterative development";* does the City foresee knowledge transfer to the City's Digital staff to co-develop the portal using an agile methodology post Year 1 implementation - to integrate it into the City's IT systems; to customize it to the City's future use cases; to treat it as standards-based IT infrastructure?

There is no plan for this at this time. The City is open to the possibility of receiving consultant services of the awarded vendor to develop one.

43. Section 5.60 states, *"Ability to create, edit, and retire metadata categories";* does the City require the ability to configure the metadata schema to optimize it to the City's use cases, without creating custom code?

    No, there is no requirement.

44. Can you further explain Req. 5.8 - Control size of individual web pages? Could you provide an example or use case?

    A solution that offers a limit on the size of the data published to one particular page is preferred. For example, if a content editor tries to publish an extremely large dataset that will consume a large amount of space, we want the ability to restrict that upload, assuming there is a limit of space allotted for the open data portal, in a final contract.

45. 5.22 - Graphic files should be relative to the site and designed with simplicity to allow for the quickest loading. Please define "relative" and provide context.

    This is in regards to having the quickest load times for each page. This is in consideration citizens that have slower connection rates to the internet.

46. 5.28 - Ability to merge datasets - Please expand on the functional request. Could you provide an example/use case where this would apply?

    We are interested in the possibility of having the ability to merge multiple files or worksheets containing a common column (or multiple common columns), and merging rows from these files across the common cell values.

47. 5.29 - Integration with City's Public facing site - Could you provide examples of other city sites that demonstrate the level of integration between two sites.

    We are looking to carry over the look and feel/branding of the new website to the open data website. We also would prefer the ability to embed interactive visualizations/tools/maps and dashboards in our public-facing City website.

48. 5.36 - Dashboard module - Can you expand on what the dashboard module is and any requirements therein? Can we you distinguish between the following - CMS, dashboard, storytelling lens?

    The dashboard module should be a visual UI that allows end users to consume information regarding targets and key performance indicators, service level agreements, etc. that are configured by City staff. Dashboards should present data in user-friendly way utilizing graphs, charts, tiles, etc. Storytelling pages should give the City the ability to convey narratives regarding various datasets.

49. 5.37 - Who will be creating dashboards (ref 5.36)?

    During the initial implementation, dashboards will be created by the vendor. Thereafter, the vendor should provide the tools to the City to create/update dashboards.

50. Who/what staff allocations will Buffalo make at the onset of the project and long-term?

The City will provide a project team and a project manager.

51. How will staff functions/roles be spread out i.e. data integration, staff education, ongoing training, overall portal management, content creation?

This will be determined during project planning phase.

52. Does Buffalo prefer a train-the-trainer program for staff certification?

Train-the-trainer program is an acceptable method.

53. How many staff and what kind of staff will receive direct training?

8 to 10 Administrators and 15-20 Content/Editors

54. How does City of Buffalo handle travel-related expenses?

Please include in bid price.

55. Our company is located in Canada. We are very interested in providing the City of Buffalo with a proposal and was wondering if we would be able to dial into the pre-proposal conference remotely on March 21, 2017?

No.

56. Will the City of Buffalo consider bids from vendors located outside of the United States? We are located in Ottawa, Canada.

Yes.

57. In response to clause 3.3.1 - The client's that we have provided open-data portals to in the past have been Federal and Provincial government bodies. Will references from these government organizations suffice? We understand that the requirement is limited to municipal customers.

No.

58. Will the City of Buffalo accept references to projects that are currently in the process of being implemented?

Yes.

59. What technology is the new City of Buffalo website, scheduled to go live in early 2018, built with? Is it an open-source technology (i.e. Drupal)? We understand that the open-data portal that we are required to build is to be built using an open-source technology and CMS.

The new website will not be built with open-source technology.

60. Is there a project incumbent? Has the provider of your new City of Buffalo website been invited to submit a response for this (i.e. open-data portal) solicitation?

Anyone can respond to the RFP.

61. Are you able to provide us with the name of the company who will be responsible for implementing the new City of Buffalo website?

    No. The contract has not been executed yet.

62. Are we required to submit a notarized 'Acknowledgements' page with our response (page 48 of RFP)?

    Yes.

63. Can the City of Buffalo provide us with estimated levels of traffic that the new open-data portal will receive? This information will be very helpful when pricing our PaaS hosting solution.

    No. We would rely on the vendor to give an estimate given past history with cities of similar size.

64. As per requirement 5.46 - Is it fine if our PaaS infrastructure is available for 99.95% during any calendar month during the applicable Subscription Term?

    We are looking for a high uptime. Please respond with how much uptime you can offer. We will consider all uptime rates.

65. Is there an estimated budget for this project? If you cannot specify exact numbers, are you able to provide us with a budget range?

    No.

66. Is Buffalo interested in a "train the trainer" training approach so that the City of Buffalo staff can take ownership and operation of the portal soonest and minimize consulting expenses?

    Yes. This would be an acceptable training approach.

67. City of Buffalo project team assigned to the open data portal project, number and roles?

    There will be a project team and a project manager.

68. Number of datasets to be hosted?

    To be determined. We would rely on the vendor to offer what they feel is an appropriate number of datasets to launch our open data portal given past history with cities of similar size.

69. Size of datasets to be hosted?

    To be determined. We would rely on the vendor to offer what they feel is the typical size of datasets uploaded to an open data portal given past history with cities of similar size.

70. What State and Federal datasets are expected to be federated/hosted to improve analysis of City of Buffalo data?

    To be determined. We would rely on the vendor to offer what they feel are appropriate state/federal datasets given past history with cities of similar size.

71. Will all requirements in Section 5 be weighted equally in determining bidders' scores? If not, please describe the weighting/scoring system that will be used.

    Please note that the presentation order of the evaluation criteria in Section 4 is equivalent to the City of Buffalo's order of importance. Section 5 is referenced in Section 4.2.6 – Demonstrations and Gap Analysis.

72. The overall project goals articulated in Section 3.1 state an interest in open-source solutions, though we understand this is not a formal requirement of this RFP. Please describe the benefits to the City that are anticipated with open-source compared to non-open-source solutions.

    An open-source solution is not a requirement, but merely a preference in preliminary discussions on what may be best for the City of Buffalo. The City will consider all solutions and solutions will only be graded on the requirements in Section 5. Any solution proposed should show a commitment to constant improvement and iterative development, as denoted in Section 5.92.

73. Are there any other project goals in Section 3.1 that bidders should understand as not being formal requirements?

    No.

74. Which vendors has the City discussed this project with before issuing this RFP?

    This question is irrelevant to responding to the RFP.

75. Which relevant software solutions has the City already seen demos of?

    This question is irrelevant to responding to the RFP.

76. Please provide information or a link to information about the New York State Public Records Retention rules referred to in Requirement 5.18.

    http://www.archives.nysed.gov/records/retention_mu-1

77. Please expand upon the "ability to merge datasets" in Requirement 5.28. Exactly what functionality is envisioned?

    We are interested in the possibility of having the ability to merge multiple files or worksheets containing a common column (or multiple common columns), and merging rows from these files across the common cell values.

78. Will the City of Buffalo waive the Performance Bond requirements? Or, will the City allow the successful Offeror to submit Alternatives to Performance Bonds (i.e., a Letter of Credit)?
    No

79. Will the City complete the attached Questionnaire? This will further our understanding of the City's Requirements, and allow us to submit a response that will best address the City's needs.
    No. Please refer to the RFP and respond accordingly.