

**SOUTH BALTIMORE
GATEWAY PARTNERSHIP**



Request for Qualifications

Website Development Services for New Website
with Accessibility Integration

Issue Date: May 31, 2024

Submission Deadline: 5:00 p.m. on July 5, 2024

Email to: procurement@sbgpartnership.org

Contents

1.	OVERVIEW	3
2.	REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS	4
2.1	Inquiries.....	4
2.2	Closing Date.....	4
2.3	Late Responses	4
2.4	Review and Selection.....	4
2.5	Acceptance of Responses	4
3.	SERVICES.....	4
4.	QUALIFICATIONS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA	6
5.	SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS	6
6.	EQUAL OPPORTUNITY	6
7.	MBE/WBE GOALS.....	7
8.	CONFLICT OF INTEREST	7
9.	LIMITATIONS	7

1. Overview/Purpose

The South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP) is embarking on a comprehensive website redevelopment project to replace its current site (www.sbgpartnership.org) and seeks qualified website developer(s) with expertise in project planning, contemporary web design, database-supported functionality, and accessibility standards. SBGP seeks to create a new website that most effectively communicates and advances the SBGP mission, organizational values, core processes, and value delivered by the organization and its partners. This will include transparent and helpful information about SBGP’s background, programs, and projects as well as evolving funding and engagement opportunities for stakeholders including community members, supplemental funders, and others. This may also allow for the eventual login and data exchange with partners and grantees.

In its most effective form, the website will enhance storytelling, express a vision, convey effectiveness of the organization, ensure transparency related to spending and project status, and increase engagement with SBGP stakeholders, which include community members. The site will clearly communicate who SBGP is, what SBGP does, how SBGP succeeds together with stakeholders, and a compelling invitation to engage.

Over time (and perhaps beyond the scope of this project), SBGP aspires to build a dynamic repository of knowledge and data that informs residents, community and civic leaders, funders, partners, vendors, and media about what has been tried, what works, and what does not in the world of community development. It should be a resource for the community groups across SBGP’s District of 17 communities. This phase of the website redesign will need to leave room to grow as programs and the organization continue to expand.

Background

SBGP is an economic development authority working in the neighborhoods of South and Southwest Baltimore, funded by casino revenues. When slot machine gambling came to Maryland, Baltimore residents were promised resources to improve their communities. SBGP was established in 2016 to fulfill that promise, stewarding funds into neighborhoods surrounding the Horseshoe Casino through a variety of programs and projects aligned with the South Baltimore Gateway Master Plan supporting community development and revitalization, health and wellness, and environmental sustainability. SBGP is not an agency of the City of Baltimore or the State of Maryland. It is governed by a Board of Directors comprised primarily of residents of the District and representatives of businesses located in the District.

The SBGP website project team has completed several steps in the “discovery” and “strategy” phases of the redevelopment project. SBGP seeks the selected vendor’s feedback and input on our detailed SWOT analysis, description of user personas and likely calls to action, and strategy assumptions for the new site. The vendor will not be starting “from scratch” in setting direction for the project.

2. Request for Qualifications

2.1 Inquiries

All inquiries related to this RFQ are to be directed, in writing, to Colline Emmanuelle, Communications & Outreach Manager for the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership, at procurement@sbgpartnership.org. Information obtained from any other source is not official and should not be relied upon.

2.2 Closing Date

All submissions must be made electronically to procurement@sbgpartnership.org, in PDF or Microsoft Word format, **by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, July 5, 2024**. Hard copies will not be accepted. Responses must include a cover page clearly marked with the name, address, phone number, and email of the respondent.

2.3 Late Responses

Late responses will not be accepted and will be returned to the responder with a letter of explanation.

2.4 Review and Selection

Qualifications will be reviewed by SBGP staff and board members. The reviewer(s) will check responses against the criteria listed below. Only responses meeting the criteria will be considered for further review. Responders meeting the criteria may be contacted for subsequent interview(s) prior to final selection.

The goal of all SBGP contracting and procurement is to ensure the best use of public funds to serve the public good by fulfilling SBGP's mission while adhering to the highest standards of professionalism and ethics. SBGP is committed to ensuring that all funds entrusted to the entity are appropriately allocated using fair, ethical, equitable, responsible, and transparent practices that demonstrate integrity.

These values guide all SBGP conduct and decision making related to procurements, bids/estimates for goods and services, agreements, contracts, and related forms of commitments.

Selection will be made by approximately mid-to-late August.

2.5 Acceptance of Responses

This RFQ is not a binding agreement to purchase goods or services. Responses to an RFQ are assessed in light of the qualification review criteria. Depending upon the volume of responses, SBGP may develop a shortlist of responders for subsequent interview(s) prior to making a final selection.

3. Services

Qualified respondents will be expected to perform the below tasks, with the precise scope to be co-developed with SGBP and detailed in a written contract(s).

Project Overview: The selected website developer will lead the project, prioritizing design, database-supported functionality, efficiency, and accessibility from the ground up and implementing features that enhance user experience across all abilities. The new site should be visually appealing and fully accessible, providing an exceptional user experience for all visitors

while ensuring ease of maintenance for our lean team.

The vendor and the deployed technology should facilitate and empower our team to manage and maintain content and functionality seamlessly and efficiently.

SBGP seeks to optimize, to the extent possible within the budget, engagement with key website personas, enabling:

1. Access to and visualization of aggregated and individual project information and community impact, including KPIs and funding details, through a rich and growing database of community improvement projects.
2. Presentation of our many projects through videos, photos, testimonials, project descriptions.
3. An interactive GIS map marking every project through the integration of Google or other interactive mapping utility to support the visualization of project data.
4. A visualization of neighborhood data/attributes/assets related to our projects.
5. Access to and visualization of publicly available financial information.
6. Automation or semi-automation of key project workflows (e.g., selected project management activities such as status reporting, email acknowledgments, deadline notices, etc.) enabling or improving self-service solutions.

Baseline Vendor Scope:

1. Extend/expand existing graphic/brand standards across all relevant applications.
2. Collaborate with SBGP staff and stakeholders to understand main objectives, audience personas, and branding guidelines to create a redevelopment plan, process, detailed scope of work, timeline, and cost estimate.
3. Review SBGP’s website project discovery and strategy documents to refine and validate recommended approaches.
4. Collaborate with SBGP to map workflows that can be automated or supported with new functionality on the new site.
5. Collaborate with SBGP to design and implement a user survey at the appropriate stage in the process and incorporate feedback into website development plan.
6. Develop a detailed project plan through QA/QC and deployment.
7. Deploy industry-standard privacy and security measures.
8. Ensure that the new website complies with relevant accessibility standards, including WCAG 2.2 guidelines to at least Level AA, and provides an inclusive experience for users with disabilities.
9. Provide conformance audit/test results documenting the testing methodology used to determine each deliverable and service conformance and the results of the accessibility audit; vendor should provide any Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPATs) to demonstrate compliance.
10. Conduct usability testing to gather feedback from diverse user groups, including disabled users, and refine the design based on their insights.

11. Potential support of ongoing website maintenance needs after deployment of the site.
12. Implement and train SBGP staff on a user-friendly content management system that enables the team to update and maintain the website easily, with minimal technical expertise or third-party support.
13. Guide SBGP staff on website analytics and measures of success.

4. Qualifications and Evaluation Criteria

The ideal firm or team will have the following qualifications:

1. Technical capabilities to deliver the envisioned project, including graphic/web design, database integration, and integration of third-party utilities including Submittable.
2. Access to content development/copy writing resources.
3. Proven capacity to deliver similar projects on time and on budget.
4. Demonstrated experience working with diverse communities.
5. Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC) Certification preferred.
6. Demonstrated expertise in creating accessible interfaces and implementing accessibility features using current web technologies.
7. Strong communication and collaboration skills, with the ability to work closely with stakeholders and translate their needs into actionable design solutions.
8. A portfolio showcasing previous website redesign projects that highlight your ability to deliver our project objectives including accessibility principles and streamline maintenance processes.

5. Submission Requirements

Please include:

1. A narrative describing the qualifications of your firm or team, responding specifically to the evaluation criteria listed above.
2. Examples of similar or relevant projects you have completed.
3. Profiles, including qualifications, of key team members.
4. A disclosure of any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest (see below).

6. Equal Opportunity

SBGP will not discriminate in its procurement with regard to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

SBGP reserves the right to select, from among a pool of qualified proposals, the team that best provides an opportunity to further our mission through Impact Investment.

7. MBE/WBE Goals

SBGP strongly encourages minority-owned and woman-owned firms to submit proposals. Respondents should indicate whether they are certified as a minority business enterprise (MBE) and/or women's business enterprise (WBE) by the City of Baltimore. By law, casino revenues spent by SBGP must meet the goals of 27 percent MBE participation and 10 percent WBE participation. Applicants should expect to develop, as needed, an MBE/WBE procurement plan tailored to the scope of work.

8. Conflict of Interest

SBGP is a public body operating within a tightly defined geographic boundary, with a large board of directors and a wide range of project partners across the private, public, and non-profit sectors. As a result, it is common for participants in one SBGP project to overlap with, or have personal or professional relationships with, participants in another SBGP project. While this is generally a benefit to the communities involved, it introduces the possibility of conflicts of interest.

SBGP takes seriously its commitment to avoid actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. The respondent should disclose any such conflicts of interest in writing. The reviewer(s) will consider the nature of the respondent's responsibilities and the degree of potential or apparent conflict in deciding the course of action that the respondent needs to take to remedy the conflict of interest.

9. Limitations

SBGP reserves the right to select the respondent of its choosing, to reject all responses, or to terminate this request at any time. SBGP may issue a new request, extend the deadline, or make other good faith efforts to expand the applicant pool if the market for goods or services is limited. In the event that the selected firm or team fails to perform adequately during the application phase, or that grantor rules require it, SBGP reserves the right to select a new firm or team for the implementation phase.

Neither this request, nor any proposals provided in response to it, constitute a contract between SBGP and the applicant(s). Selection by SBGP does not guarantee that the parties will successfully negotiate or execute a contract, and final scope or contract details may vary from the description contained herein.

Applicants who are not successful may request a meeting to debrief about the selection process. SBGP documents created or used during the selection process, including any score cards, notes, emails, memos, or other written materials, are internal materials and will not be made available.

Late proposals, or proposals that are not fully responsive to the requirements listed herein, will be disqualified.