

# **Request for Proposal: Website Design & Development**

Massachusetts Housing Partnership

May 12, 2025

*Updated May 19, 2025*





## A. Project Overview

### Introduction

The Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) in Boston, Massachusetts, seeks a vendor partner to design and develop a new website that will replace our current site – [www.mhp.net](http://www.mhp.net).

This Request for Proposal (RFP) represents the needs and desires explicitly expressed by MHP and must be used as the basis for the bidder's preparation of its proposal. It is the bidder's responsibility to coordinate all responses and ensure a complete solution is presented to MHP. Responses must be submitted electronically no later than **5 p.m. EDT on June 10, 2025**, to [cclark@mhp.net](mailto:cclark@mhp.net) and [adunn@mhp.net](mailto:adunn@mhp.net).

### Background

MHP was created in 1985 to foster civic leadership on affordable housing and break down local barriers to housing development through effective guidance, advocacy, research, programs, provision of long-term capital, and technical support. As a leader and innovator, MHP expands access to affordable housing and promotes housing equity in communities across the Commonwealth. We further our impact by working in concert with the Healey-Driscoll Administration, the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), our sister organizations, and housing advocacy organizations with a focus on innovation and fulfilling unmet needs in the housing ecosystem. More information about MHP's mission, vision, values, strategy, and goals can be found in the [2025 Strategic Plan Summary](#).

### Due Date of Proposal

The deadline for receipt of proposals is **5 p.m. EDT on June 10, 2025**. Late submissions will not be accepted.

### Principal Point of Contact

The principal contacts at MHP are Callie Clark, Director of Policy and Communications, and Audrey Dunn, Digital Media Specialist. All questions and correspondence should be submitted in writing to Callie at [cclark@mhp.net](mailto:cclark@mhp.net) and Audrey at [adunn@mhp.net](mailto:adunn@mhp.net).

## B. Project Goals

### Current Website

Our current website [www.mhp.net](http://www.mhp.net) serves as the public-facing communications hub for our various teams, each of which has a distinct audience. On average, the site has approximately

15,000 users per month, the vast majority of whom (approximately 10,000+) are prospective homebuyers visiting our Homeownership pages. Other audiences include municipal staff, planners, affordable housing advocates and researchers, and affordable housing developers seeking rental financing, among others.

The current version of our website was built nearly ten (10) years ago and no longer serves us as well as it once did, for a variety of reasons:

- The site is a Craft Content Management System (“CMS”) 3, which is at end-of-life and is no longer supported. The site’s features are not up to date with the newest advances in software development, plugins, and website best practices;
- The current structure of the site has not been able to adequately accommodate a growing suite of teams and programs;
- The current site is too reliant on external web developers for editing;
- Many pages have been added ad hoc since the site’s creation and resultantly lack the insights provided by a UI/UX engineer;
- The site lacks accessibility and language translation capabilities;
- Many of the pages require a refresh and restructuring for a better user experience;
- The overall look and feel of the site is dated.

## Immediate Goals

1. Work closely together to thoughtfully design and develop a new website that will serve us for years to come.
2. Help us select a new web host.
3. Training in both website editing and website best practices for key MHP staffers.

## Continuing Goals

1. Work with us on an ongoing basis to address issues such as security and other updates, general troubleshooting, and larger structural edits if/when they are needed.
2. Assist us in navigating any hosting needs or issues as they arise.
3. Assist us with any Google Analytics needs or issues as they arise.

## Web Design Examples

These are examples of websites that we like, and some reasons why:

- [Harriscenter.org](http://Harriscenter.org)
  - Well branded, clean, well-organized/structured, visually appealing
  - Great news and events pages layout

- Two menu options: menu bar on top, sidebar menu within pages
- Many opportunities for photos; various options for photo captions and credit
- Language and accessibility menus
- [National Audubon Society](#)
  - Unique look, visually appealing, well branded
  - Good use of tags for different subject categories
- [CHAPA](#)
  - Clear buckets for different audiences to find relevant information in
  - News section makes it easy to incorporate photos easily
  - Map element on the “Municipal Engagement Initiative” page
- [MassBudget](#)
  - Clean, user-friendly design
  - Incorporates “featured” rotating tease
  - Like the use of rotating images for the hero image
  - Sub-navigation appears simple; site makes it very easy to find exactly what type of resources you are looking for
  - Simple and bold “About Us” page
- [MassInc](#)
  - Easy to navigate “Events” page
  - Good use of tagging in the “Updates” section
  - Gives audiences various ways to find materials, either organized by topic or delivery method
- [East Bay Regional Park District](#)
  - Ability to easily switch the entire website to a dozen languages
  - Incorporated an interactive map
  - Ability to seamlessly incorporate videos on “Publications and Media” page
- [Barr Foundation](#)
  - Front page incorporates dynamic photos
  - The search bar is large yet unobtrusive
  - Top navigation is very simple with only three category buckets
  - Each topic bucket has a section with information about the team working on that topic, including photos of the team
  - “Staff” page, under “About Us,” is different than others; provides contact info, associated works, and a bio for each staffer
  - The site appears to have a well-maintained and flourishing blog page

## C. Vendor Requirements & Preferences

### Scope of Work

## Technical Requirements:

- Experienced Craft CMS or custom-build WordPress developer (strong preference for those two options but open to others)
  - System must be user-friendly for nontechnical staff to make updates
- Custom web page development skills (custom HTML and JavaScript) that includes all aspects of front and back-end development; specifically, the selected developer and/or agency will need to be able to build:
  - [A new ONE Mortgage calculator](#)
  - [A new project portfolio map](#) which may either reference or include additional information from other teams not shown on the current map
  - Powerful search function
  - Integrated application forms that collect data
- UI/UX design
  - We are a quasi-public non-profit organization with a very broad mission and many diverse audiences. In addition to the general public, researchers, and housing advocates, we do both business-to-business and business-to-customer transactions. We want to ensure that our site is easily navigable for discrete audiences.
- The selected developer and/or agency will be responsible for all aspects of quality assurance testing and should detail the quality assurance and warranty process in the response, including the client's involvement in testing and final acceptance.
- Accessible/ADA Compliant; accessibility audit; able to implement accessibility and language translation options (including Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Russian, Vietnamese and Khmer Cambodian). The website must comply with the Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA), Title II, and meet the required standards. The selected developer must provide documentation of accessibility testing. Additionally, the site must remain accessible across desktop and mobile platforms.
- Test environment available on an ongoing basis.
- Third-party software integrations (Constant Contact)
  - **The previous version** of this RFP listed MailChimp and Salesforce instead of Constant Contact.
- Mobile device optimization
- Training
- Ongoing maintenance and support; include defined service level agreements

- Cybersecurity – include a cybersecurity plan outlining access to controls, logging and alerting, a vulnerability assessment and general best practices.
- Bidders offering hosting services must be SOC2 compliant.

## Optional Design Services:

As an additional service, we invite bidders to provide information on any design services they offer that could enhance our website and overall branding. Please include:

- A description of your design services, including website UI/UX improvements, branding, and graphic design capabilities.
- Describe your typical design process with clients.
- Examples of past design work, particularly in website design, digital marketing assets, or branding for organizations similar to ours.
- Pricing structure for design services, whether included in the website development package or available as an add-on.
- Any recommendations for design enhancements that would improve user experience, engagement and accessibility

Bidders are encouraged to highlight how their design services could contribute to a more visually appealing, functional, and user-friendly website.

## Preferences:

- Graphic design for new logo and branding, or able to seamlessly integrate new branding from a third-party agency into our new website
- Experience working with cause-driven organizations and/or governmental agencies

## D. Proposal Expectations

### Anticipated Project Timeline and Instructions

Planned completion dates for important project activities are listed below:

Activity	<b>*Anticipated Timeline</b>
1. RFP Posting	May 12, 2025
2. Vendor Proposals Due	June 10, 2025, 5 p.m. EDT

3. Proposal Review	June 2025
4. Vendor Interviews	July/August 2025
5. Due Diligence & Negotiations	August 2025
6. Final Agreement(s) Signed	September 2025
7. Website Live	June 2026

**\*Dates are subject to change**

## Vendor Evaluation Criteria

The criteria included below will be used to evaluate vendors.

MHP is seeking a long-term partnership that:

- Provides recognized experience and success in website design, development, and ongoing support
- Can meet MHP's defined timeline
- Offers access to vendor support staff to report issues and obtain assistance with acknowledgement of requests for support
- Provides industry knowledge, trends, and market data including information on best practices and trends within the industry

Before awarding a contract, MHP will review the proposed vendor's ability to perform the contract successfully, considering factors such as the vendor's integrity (including a review of the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non-Procurement Programs published by the U.S. General Services Administration), compliance with public policy, record of past performance (including contacting previous clients of the vendor), and financial, administrative, and technical capability to perform contract work of the size and type involved and within the time provided under the contract. Contracts shall not be awarded to debarred, suspended, or ineligible vendors.

MHP reserves the right to determine, at its sole discretion, whether non-compliance with any of the bid requirements is deemed insubstantial. In such instances, MHP may opt to seek clarification, permit the bidder to make minor corrections, impose penalties in evaluating the response, or utilize a combination of these remedies.

MHP, at its sole discretion, may consider in its review process evaluations of a bidder's performance in any current engagements on programs or contracts and any other information available to MHP.

Responses may be reviewed and evaluated by any person(s) at the discretion of MHP, including independent consultants retained by MHP now or in the future, for the sole purpose of obtaining an analysis of responses.



At any time during its review, MHP may determine some element of a bidder's response requires clarification to verify its responsiveness to the RFP or facilitate a fair comparison with competing proposals. In such cases, MHP may seek written clarification from the bidder. All bidders shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for clarification.

## Response Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the responses:

1. Two to four samples of past projects that are similar in scope and complexity.
2. Three client references, with their preferred contact information.
3. Estimated project timeline, including major tasks and milestones.
4. Project budget by line item.
5. Plan for mobile and accessible design.

## Response Inclusions

MHP expects all responses to be completed per this RFP and to include the following:

### Attachments:

1. **Technical Proposal:** The Technical Proposal shall include:

#### Approach

- The bidder's understanding of the overall project, its goals, and objectives.
- Evidence of the bidder's qualifications for performing the work specified in this RFP.
- A summary of the proposal that includes an overview of the approach the bidder will take to undertake the project work, including system integration, hosting, data migration and testing, as applicable.
- An affirmative declaration that the bidder can meet and satisfy the terms of this RFP including the technical requirements.
- Relevant certifications/classifications related to compliance of bidder's own operations and data privacy practices.

#### Project Timeline:

- A detailed timeline for completion and description of the project management tools that are utilized to deploy and manage projects.
- The amount of time each task/deliverable will take to complete.

- Your availability for starting this work.
- Discussion of the points of participation for the MHP team and time allotted for each activity.
- Sample implementation plan.

Qualifications:

- Summary of the company's history, location of offices, location of headquarters, number of full-time staff, location of staff included in the bid, resources, and operations.
- List the staff that will be working on the project, including biographies and experience working with government agencies, if any. Please include the project manager that will be working on this engagement.
- Provide resumes of key personnel and describe their specific role in the project. Please include the following information:
  - Name
  - Position
  - Experience
  - Skills
  - Relevant certifications

**2. Cost Proposal:**

- The Cost Proposal shall include a fixed price for the total cost of this project, broken out by task/deliverable.
- Cost Proposals must be submitted separately from the Technical Proposal and include: a cost narrative that describes the bidder's pricing approach, including any optional services, new or innovative technologies, or implementation or operational approaches that may provide cost savings.
- The bidder shall include details regarding any assumptions that were made to reach the costs provided in the Cost Proposal. Cost proposals should clearly cover the following attributes but not limited to:
  - Product cost / license cost (s) including basis for cost (number of users, etc.)
  - Total cost of pass-through expenses
  - Implementation costs
  - Configuration or customization costs related to technical components identified in the technical response
  - Hosting costs
  - Third-party tools (if any)
  - Instrument integration costs (if any)
  - Training costs
  - Add-on features
  - Data storage limits and fees (if applicable)
- Hourly rate, including any discounts for government and nonprofit clients.

- Quote for ongoing annual website hosting and maintenance, support, updates post-launch, or annual platform subscription for three to five years.

MHP will assess each compliant and technically acceptable bidder's Cost Proposal in terms of cost realism, clear description of costs, proposed labor rates and hours allocated, and a total ownership cost approach with implementation, maintenance, and support costs over the contract term. Cost Proposals will be evaluated for their reasonableness and competitiveness and value. Cost shall be one factor, but not the sole factor, that MHP considers in its overall evaluation.

MHP reserves the right to review all aspects of each Cost Proposal for reasonableness and to request clarification of any Cost Proposal where detailed cost information is required but appears to be incomplete or missing. MHP additionally reserves the right to request that the bidder break out the prices for the proposal into individual milestones.

**3. Due Diligence Package:** Include a Due Diligence package containing the following:

- a. Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery/Incident Response Programs and Test Results
- b. Annual Report, Balance Sheet, or other Financial Information for the past three years
- c. SSAE18 or other Report of Systems or Controls
- d. Proof of Insurance
- e. Latest Technical/Security Test Results for External Network, Internal Network, and Social Engineering Testing
- f. Bidders are required to provide detailed information regarding their legal and regulatory compliance with applicable laws, regulations, standards, and compliance requirements. Please include the following:
  - a. Describe how your organization ensures compliance with all applicable laws for the products or services being offered. Include any certifications, licenses, and permits obtained.
  - b. Describe how your organization stays up to date on regulatory changes and your process for ensuring ongoing compliance with applicable regulations and standards.
  - c. Describe your organization's best practices. Include any certifications and accreditations obtained.
  - d. Describe your organization's procedures for safeguarding sensitive information, including data protection measures, privacy policies and compliance with applicable data protection regulations. Provide examples of how you protect confidential information.
- g. Contract, Service, and Performance Fulfillment score cards, if available
- h. Descriptions of three relevant projects, at least one of which was developed in the proposed CMS or Platform+1.

- i. Bidders must provide at least three (3) references from previous clients. While we understand that not all projects may involve government agencies, at least one reference should be from a government agency, if possible. Please provide the following details for each reference:
    - i. Name of the client and address
    - ii. Contact name, telephone number, and email address for a relevant point of contact
    - iii. Nature of the project or engagement
    - iv. Date and Duration of the project or engagement
    - v. Installed and supported software
    - vi. Any notable achievements or outcomes
- 4. **Sample Contract:** Include a sample contract with standard terms and conditions. Submission of a sample contract does not imply acceptance or a commitment by MHP to utilize said contract. MHP intends to assess the proposed terms and negotiate as needed to ensure that the terms and conditions of the contract are aligned with MHP's requirements and objectives. Any contract MHP enters into will be subject to negotiation and mutual agreement of the parties. The entire content of the bidder's response to the RFP shall be binding on the bidder. The specifications and contents of a response, including any supplemental documents, may, at MHP's discretion, be incorporated into any contract resulting from this RFP.
- 5. **Sample Service Level Agreement:** Include a sample service level agreement based on the proposed solution that may include elements of the following but not limited to: the application availability, planned maintenance, application response time, archive retrieval, help desk support, problem resolution, security breach, data backup, data location, data privacy, secure disposal of data, service-level bonus/penalties, excess usage, subcontracted services, SLR renewals, change control/release management, business continuity planning, training/knowledge database, and services that are covered/not covered.
- 6. **Technical Specifications:** Include any necessary technical specifications, hardware and software requirements, and supported devices for the proposed system.
- 7. **Product Roadmaps:** Include a product roadmap for the next twelve (12) months for the proposed system.
- 8. **Technology and Strategic Plan:** Include a summary of the company's technology plan and overall strategic plan for the next 1-2 years including an overview of the company's strategic and growth initiatives, and plans related to R&D.

9. **Knowledge Transfer and Transition Support:** The selected bidder shall maintain all documentation and relevant technical material in a suitable form for knowledge transfer and transition support.
10. **Offshore Resources:** The bidder is required to provide information regarding the use of offshore resources. Bidders will not be allowed to send any customer data offshore. Please address the following in your submission:
- a. Does your organization plan to use offshore resources (e.g., personnel, subcontractors) for your software solution/application? If yes, please provide the location and roles of offshore personnel or subcontractors involved in the project.
  - b. Risk mitigation strategies
  - c. Data Protection and Security Measures
11. **Signature Page:** An officer or other official of the bidder who has legal authority to commit the entity to the performance of the proposed services must sign the attached Signature Page and submit it with the response.

## Acceptance/Rejection

Issuance of this RFP does not obligate MHP to contract, in whole or in part, for services specified herein. MHP reserves the right to cancel this RFP, in whole or in part, or to reject in whole or in part, any and all proposals. This RFP does not commit MHP to pay for costs of any kind that may be incurred in connection with a response. No minimum purchase will be committed to under this RFP. The proposed solutions should be submitted on the most favorable terms. Subsequent to the receipt of the proposed solution, MHP may schedule discussions with a bidder if it becomes necessary to clarify elements of the proposed solution. Proposed solutions will be reviewed for support of the objectives defined in the RFP. Continued participation by submitting vendors in this project will be based upon the proposed solution that best satisfies MHP's requirements as outlined within the RFP. MHP reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposed solutions received.

Any and all responses, data, materials, information and documentation submitted in response to this RFP shall become the property of MHP and shall be subject to public disclosure. As a quasi-public entity, MHP is subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law. There are very limited and narrow exceptions to disclosure under the Public Records Law.

### **Signature Page**

I am authorized to sign this document and submit the attached response to MHP's Request for Proposal (RFP) on behalf of:

Vendor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Vendor Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Vendor Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Vendor Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

My signature constitutes acceptance of the terms and conditions of this RFP.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: