



**NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
STATEWIDE IT PROCUREMENT OFFICE**
<https://it.nc.gov/resources/statewide-it-procurement-office>

Solicitation Addendum

Solicitation Number: 46-DNCR-25-2051

Solicitation Description: New Website for NC Museum of Natural Sciences

Solicitation Opening Date and Time: March 10, 2025, at 2:00 PM ET

Addendum Number: 1

Addendum Date: March 3, 2025

Contract Specialist or Purchasing Agent: Dennis Jimenez, Procurement Specialist
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1. Return one properly executed copy of this addendum with bid response or prior to the Bid Opening Date/Time listed above.
2. Following are questions received about the solicitation and the State's answers to the questions.

Question #	Document Section	Vendor Question	State's Response
1	2.3	The RFP mentions the scope of this project is for a new NCMNS site, however there are other URLs, login portals and subsites connected to the flagship site. For clarity, can you please confirm how many sites are involved in this project -- just the main site or are there intranets, sign in portals or sub-sites to include in our proposal?	An assessment of the subsites is currently underway, so unfortunately, we don't know how many might make the final cut at this time.
2	2.3	We look forward to working with the NCMNS to finalize designs that best represent your organization. This could involve a series of interviews with external site users, leadership, and other key stakeholders. How many internal and external stakeholders will be part of this project?	We aim to keep this number as small as possible while still achieving good feedback and buy-in. We are meeting with internal stakeholders—such as our Friends Group, director's office, event programmers, and content creators—now in order to have a good understanding of their needs/ wants at the outset of the process. We expect there will be status meetings as site building progresses, for refinement of creative design and UI.
3	3.5	Please list the external integrations (Salesforce, Mailchimp, Mapbox, etc.) on the website, and categorize each integration appropriately: API integration, JavaScript snippet/embed, iFrame, or deep link to third-party site.	Information about integrations found in section C14 of RFP.

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4	3.5	The RFP mentions you want an intuitive/improved search function. Can you tell me about what you are using now, how it falls short and what your ideal solution would be?	Currently there are three different searches: a main search powered by Google, a search for programs and events, and a search for field trip program opportunities. For users, these can be hard to find and difficult to use. Improved sorting and filtering options would go a long way but so would a better search program and interface. Search functionality is perhaps one of the most important user features that our site can offer, and so we want to make sure it's not only functional but robust.
5	3.5	The RFP mentions coordination between the vendor and DNCR team; who is on the core project team and what are their roles?	Kerry Irish, Project Manager; Jessica Bandel, Web Designer; Aris Moratalla, Technology Information Coordinator
6	3.5	Is the Project core team mainly developer/technical focused or marketing/communications focused? If both are represented, is one group more prominent than the other?	Once the site has launched, the day-to-day use and maintenance of it will be housed under the marketing/ communications office. Higher technical processes will largely be conducted by either our technology information coordinator or by an outside vendor.
7	3.5	Has any kind of accessibility audit been performed in the past 3 years?	Not that we know of, but we do know that we have a lot of work to do in this regard. We are requiring the selected vendor to build a new site that is WCAG 2.1 AA compliant.
8	3.5	Is your team familiar with ADA best practices when writing content?	Yes.
9	3.5	Do you leverage any automated testing software/programs on your current site? (example, Cypress, Cucumber, Selenium, etc)	We do not have automated testing tools in place for the existing website. However, as part of the redevelopment process, we are open to implementing automated testing solutions to improve quality assurance, ensure functionality across different devices and browsers, and enhance overall site performance.
10	N/A	Do you have brand guidelines? If so, when was the last time they were updated?	We have current brand guidelines for the institution but want to revisit guidelines for the website itself.
11	N/A	Are there any of the following UX deliverables that you have already completed, or would like to exclude from the project scope? Goals & KPIs Personas Brand Identity Positioning (both visual & verbal guidelines) Site Map Audit of Content Types Wireframes Desired Publishing Workflow	Some of this work is already underway but we also hope to walk through these processes with the selected vendor.
12	N/A	What is the budget for this project? Knowing your budget is critical to help us right-size the project plan.	Budget is not available.

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13	N/A	Are you more interested in exploring design direction collaboratively & iteratively or would you rather receive our direction and recommendations in a more hands-off manner?	Collaboratively.
14	N/A	What are your team's goals for the look and feel of the final product? How much does your team wish to push and modernize the design from where it is today?	We are seeking a complete overhaul of our current web presence. We aim to adopt Drupal as the CMS and are eager to explore the new design tools (Experience Builder) that Drupal 11 has to offer.
15	N/A	Can you let us know the technology the current site is built with? (Wordpress, Drupal, Backdrop, Other technology)	Wordpress / php
16	N/A	"How would you rate the complexity of your current site? Low - a few pages that don't change frequently Medium - CMS driven site with multiple editors High - Highly dynamic with complex tools and business logic"	High. We aim for Medium with the new site: far less content, an easy-to-use editorial interface, and efficient navigation for end-users.
17	N/A	To help us understand the complexity of your existing site further please identify: Number of unique page types (Ex. Blog Posts, Events, General Pages, News, etc) Total number of pages/content Number of tag groups (how your content is categorized) Number of custom user roles (Administrator, Editor, etc) Do you have any editorial workflows for content?	Total number of pages/content: over 2,000 Number of tag groups (how your content is categorized): at least 10 Number of custom user roles (Administrator, Editor, etc): 6 Do you have any editorial workflows for content?: Not with our current site but we will be implementing workflows for our next site.
18	N/A	If you are using a content management system (Drupal, Backdrop, Wordpress), how many community supported plugins or modules are you using on your site?	Approximately 30.
19	N/A	If you are using a content management system (Drupal, Backdrop, Wordpress), how many custom plugins or modules are you using on your site? Custom functionality often impacts overall complexity.	Institutional knowledge of the site and how it was built is fairly thin right now, so it's hard to tell just how many plugins are custom. But there is at least one custom module.
20	N/A	If you have internal developers, can they provide a high level overview of some of their expectations of development partners?	No high-level developers currently.
21	N/A	Where is the site hosted?	LeaseWeb.
22	N/A	Is there an incumbent vendor responding to this opportunity?	No incumbent.

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23	N/A	We understand that part of the scope for this project is to assess and audit content, reconfigure the Information Architecture, etc. how much of the current content do you foresee being migrated or included in the new site ?	We want a completely fresh start content-wise.
24	N/A	After reviewing NCMNS' RFP, there are several viable Content Management System options that will fulfill your project requirements. To help us understand what is most important to NCMNS, can you please rank the following from 1 (least important) to 4 (most important): Content Authoring Granular Workflows & permissions 3rd Party integrations Complex data structures/taxonomy	Content Authoring: 4 Granular Workflows & permissions: 3 3rd Party integrations: 1 Complex data structures/taxonomy: 2
25	N/A	Is NCMNS considering open-source solutions for this project? If so, does your team have a preference for a CMS?	We are eager to ditch Wordpress and move to a Drupal based site.
26	N/A	How many average monthly unique visits (sessions in Google Analytics) does each site in scope receive?	650k users in a year, average of 54k per month.
27	N/A	What level of uptime SLA will each website require? Will each site require the same uptime SLA, or will this differ? (If so, please specify)	We expect a high level of uptime across all websites and related subsites. For the main NCMNS website and any associated subsites, we would require an uptime SLA of 99.9% or higher to ensure reliability and minimize downtime. This is critical for maintaining a seamless user experience, particularly for event bookings, donations, and general public access. If any subsites have different usage or traffic patterns, we may adjust the SLA slightly based on their specific requirements. However, the goal is to maintain a consistent level of reliability across all sites.
28	N/A	Do you have any special requirements as it relates to HTTPS certificates?	Our primary requirement is that all HTTPS certificates meet industry standards for security and compatibility. We have recently purchased Sectigo certificates to cover our primary domain and multiple subdomains. Any proposed solution should support the use of these certificates or provide an equivalent level of encryption, trust, and management flexibility.
29	N/A	If SSL certificates are provided at no cost to you, would these be acceptable or are you required to use an existing certificate?	If SSL certificates are provided at no cost and meet our security and compatibility requirements, we are open to evaluating them as an alternative.
30	3.5	Will you be connecting your CMS(s) to any internal systems behind firewalls? Please list internal/external integrations and how they are implemented.	Information about integrations found in section C14 of RFP.

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31	N/A	Will a dedicated set of IP addresses be needed for allowlisting?	At this time, we do not anticipate needing a dedicated set of IP addresses for allowlisting. However, if specific integrations, security measures, or administrative access require allowlisting, we will evaluate and address those needs as they arise.
32	N/A	Will you need to leverage CDN geolocation data in your CMS application?	We don't have a specific requirement to leverage CDN geolocation data, but we are open to exploring its potential benefits.
33	N/A	What measures have you put in place to enforce security on your current site?	SFA and firewall via Wordfence.
34	N/A	Have you experienced anything like DDoS Attacks, unauthorized environment access, or other?	Unknown.
35	N/A	Are you using a Web Application Firewall (WAF)? If "yes", please provide the name. If "no", will a WAF be desired to protect your websites?	Yes, Wordfence currently.
36	3.3	Can you please clarify the specific level of compliance required for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 (A, AA, or AAA)?	WCAG 2.1 Level AA. More information about the state's accessibility requirements can be found in the "State of North Carolina Digital Accessibility and Usability Guide"
37	3.3	Could you provide further details regarding specific accessibility requirements, such as screen reader and keyboard navigation support?	See section A, point 2 of the "State of North Carolina Digital Accessibility and Usability Guide"
38	3.2	Please provide more information about the specific types of data that will be stored on the website, particularly regarding the "Low Risk" data classification.	Program/exhibit events, news and press releases, mostly static informational webpages, and credentials for users who publish via the site. The site will not conduct commerce nor store PII.
39	3.2	Regarding the required cloud hosting environment, could you please describe your current approach to website hosting? This will help us ensure our proposed solution aligns with your existing practices. Specifically, we're interested in learning about: The current hosting provider(s) and infrastructure. Any existing security measures in place. Current data backup and disaster recovery procedures. Any current cloud-based services that NCMNS is using.	Currently, the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences' website is hosted by LeaseWeb. The existing infrastructure primarily consists of a traditional web hosting setup, though we are evaluating potential changes as part of the redevelopment process. Regarding security measures, we have SSL encryption in place, and we are assessing the need for a Web Application Firewall (WAF) and other security enhancements. For data backup and disaster recovery, we currently follow standard hosting provider backup protocols. However, as we move forward, we will review and refine our backup and recovery strategies to ensure optimal data protection and site resilience.
40	3.5	Please clarify the maintenance and support requirements for the website, including the expected level of vendor involvement.	It is currently anticipated that long term maintenance of the site is conducted in-house; however, we are also open to hiring ongoing technical support from an outside vendor.

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41	3.5	Could you elaborate on the training requirements for staff on the website's functionality?	Our internal tech team—a group consisting of two, maybe three people—will need to be trained such that they can manage site processes as administrators typically do. Our team of site administrators will undertake the training of on-staff content creators and editorial users.
42	N/A	Please clarify the specific level of experience required for vendors in designing and developing websites for museums or similar organizations?	Our preferred vendor would have experience in working with government entities, navigating bureaucratic processes, and delivering a WCAG compliant site with creative design elements.
43	N/A	Could you provide more information about the project budget?	Budget not available.
44	3.3	Please provide a more detailed timeline for the project beyond the anticipated procurement schedule.	Once we have formally contracted for the work, we hope to have a new site launched within a year from the start of work. We aim to work closely with the selected vendor to create a project timeline and workflows.
45	3.7 Attach F	As we are based in Texas with art of excellence center in India, could you please clarify any specific requirements or considerations regarding out-of-state or international vendors?	<p>This is an open bid. Vendors wishing to register to receive purchase orders, get public bidding invitations, or become a HUB/NCSBE Certified vendor for the state of North Carolina should complete the registration process through the <u>NC electronic Vendor Portal (eVP)</u>. This registration allows companies to receive purchase orders from <u>Entities using the NC eProcurement System</u>.</p> <p>A guide to registering for eVP can also be found on the <u>vendor training page</u>.</p> <p>Please review Section 7.1 of the RFP.</p>
46	N/A	Can you share any information you have on the budget for this project?	Budget is not available.
47	6.1	Are out-of-state vendors eligible to submit a proposal?	Yes.

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48	6.2	If NC registration is required, is there a grace period for obtaining it post-award?	<p>Yes, Vendors shall register with the NC electronic Vendor Portal (eVP) in order to submit a proposal for this solicitation. This registration will allow companies to receive purchase orders from <u>Entities using the NC eProcurement System</u>. A guide to registering for eVP can also be found on the <u>vendor training page</u>.</p> <p>Vendors do not have to be registered with the NC Secretary of State to submit an offer; however, in order to receive an award/contract with the State, they must be registered. Registration can be completed at the following website: https://www.sosnc.gov/Guides/launching_a_business</p>
49	N/A	Would subcontracting or partnering with an NC-registered firm be an acceptable alternative?	Yes.
50	N/A	Could you let us know what the budget is for this work?	Budget is not available.
51	N/A	Could we request an extension to the submission deadline?	No.
52	3.3	Could you please confirm you are not looking for a COTS, but a custom solution for the same?	We need an installation of Drupal with custom taxonomies, content types, and view blocks/pages; the site requires theming that meets WCAG 2.1 Level AA.
53	6.1	Could you let us know if you have a local preference or are you open to a Canadian agency that has done similar work with clients across the United States, with some currently being the States of California, Colorado and Wyoming?	No preference, Vendors are required to register in NC E-Procurement and Ariba Sourcing Tool. More information is available via: https://eprocurement.nc.gov/training/vendor-training
54	N/A	Would you need any copywriting or content migration services?	Copywriting will be handled in-house. Very little of the currently published content will need to be migrated.
55	N/A	Would you need any original or stock videography or photography?	No.
56	N/A	Would you require hosting, dns or ssl services?	No, these items are handled internally.
57	N/A	Is there a CMS that you have a preference for over the other?	Drupal, preferably the latest version (11).
58	N/A	What CMS platform do you use currently?	Wordpress.

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59	2.0	Which part of the existing website this new website will be replacing? Is this https://www.dncr.nc.gov/programs-services/come-hear-nc/music-museum?	The new site will be for naturalsciences.org , the official site of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences.
60	2.0	The current website is hosted on Digital Commons managed by NCDIT: https://itservices.nc.gov/services/business-applications/digital-commons-websites#ServiceSupport-450 , what will be the role for NCDIT to play in this new website development, data migration and maintenance phases with the contractor?	Our site is not hosted by Digital Commons. NCDIT will play no role in the delivery of the new site.
61	3.1	Does NCDIT has Microsoft SharePoint Statewide license agreement that the contractor can leverage? Who can we contact to get this information. This will help to reduce software license cost. Will you consider open source software solution which is supported and managed by both its own developer community and an enterprise vendor? The only different between the community version and the enterprise version is that the community version is free, and the enterprise version has a steep license cost.	I am unfamiliar with NCDIT's licensing agreements. You would need to contact that department to learn more.
62	3.4	The website must be securely hosted in the cloud - which cloud vendor? - Google, Azure or Amazon Cloud?	Our current server vendor is LeaseWeb.
63	3.5	Will the authorized administrators and users login to the website with his/her user name and password be acceptable? Can you be specific about the requirement for the authorized admin and users to login to the website?	Username and password might need a form of SFA to match our current login set up.
64	N/A	What is the ball park budget of this new website project?	Budget is not available.
65	N/A	What current CMS are you using?	Wordpress.
66	N/A	What are some things the team likes about the current CMS?	It's more user friendly than creating pages by code.
67	2.3	What are some things the team DOES NOT like about the current	The way Wordpress manages content is overly complicated and not user friendly, especially for editorial users. Workflows are nonexistent currently because the content doesn't aggregate in a master table, and so it's extremely difficult to track what is being drafted/ published.
68	N/A	What is the current annual spend on CMS, hosting, ongoing support, etc?	Not available
69	N/A	Are you open to evaluating an open source CMS?	We have already determined that we'd like the next site built on Drupal.

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70	N/A	What was the budget for the last website redesign & development effort?	Budget is not available.
71	N/A	For your current site, did your internal team build it or did a vendor? If the vendor, who was it?	Internal team who has since separated from the agency.
72	3.5	The RFP mentions needing to integrate with other platforms as needed. Can you please provide some examples?	Volgistics, Blackbaud, JotForms are a few. More info found in section C14.
73	3.2	The RFP mentions some security compliance standards like SOC II, ISO, even FedRAMP and potentially needing to supply third party audits... Which of these standards (or others) required for the platform you choose and which are nice to have?	Because the data is classified as public third-party attestations, third-party security compliance certifications are not required.
74	3.3	Are there any accessibility or content policy compliance you track against (WCAG, GDPR, etc)? If so, please state	The delivered site is required to be compliant with WCAG 2.1 Level AA as well as the state's accessibility policy
75	N/A	Do you currently use anything to conduct accessibility scanning & reporting, and to help remediate issues? If so, please state	We just started using Acquia Optimize.
76	N/A	How many pages in total are your website(s)	Over 2,000. We anticipate migrating very little of this content.
77	N/A	Does your team use a digital asset management (DAM) solution to manage, govern, and distribute creative assets & documents? If so, which one?	Currently, no.
78	N/A	Do you have a CDN and/or WAF in place currently? If so, please specify which	WAF is provided by WordFence. Unsure about CDN.
79	N/A	Please provide the average monthly page views that your in-scope sites receive (to nearest 100K is fine)	175K.
80	N/A	Are there any documents or content not within the current CMS that the team would like to be able to have the site's search query? or is only CMS content relevant to site searches?	We don't know at this time.
81	N/A	Do you have a preferred CMS for NCMNS's new website, or are you open to any CMS?	Drupal 11.
82	N/A	Are there any sub-sites/ sub-domains that we need to consider along with the new website?	An audit of subsites and their possible migration is being undertaken now, so unfortunately, we don't have a firm answer at this time.
83	3.5	Can you provide a complete list of third-party integrations?	Volgistics, Blackbaud, JotForms, are a few. More info found in section C14.
84	3.5	Will there be a requirement for payment gateways?	Payments are collected via Blackbaud, which will need to be integrated into the site.

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85	N/A	Are there any specific requirements for the website's search functionality, such as filtering, indexing, or integration with external data sources?	Not at this time.
86	3.5	What would be the anticipated volume of content that needs to be migrated from the main website?	Our current site has over 2,000 pages but we don't want to migrate the entirety of that content to the new site.
87	3.5	Is there an existing issue tracking system in place, such as JIRA or Bugherd?	Internally, we use Asana to collect, track, and complete website update requests.
88	N/A	Do you have a DevOps setup in place, or do you expect the vendor to provide it?	We do not have a DevOps setup in place and are open to having the vendor set it up for us, as our small team would find it challenging to manage this internally.
89	3.5	How many staff members are anticipated to require training, and what is their current level of proficiency with website management tools?	The immediate team that will manage the site as administrators comprises two, maybe three, people. It is expected that these three, once trained by the vendor, will provide training to the staff members who will serve as editorial users.
90	3.5	Will there be different levels of training for technical and non-technical staff?	We don't know at this time.
91	N/A	Can you provide the brand guidelines for the website to be modernized?	We have brand guidelines for the institution but want to revisit guidelines for the website itself with the chosen vendor.
92	N/A	How often do you do plugin upgrades?	Currently, not often due to Wordpress installation itself being behind on updates.
93	N/A	For SEO, we typically use two products: Yoast and Rank Math. Do you have any preferences?	Our state DIT requires us to use Acquia Optimize to analyze various metrics for the site.
94	3.2	Are there specific security standards or certifications that the website must meet (e.g., SOC2, NIST)?	Because the data is classified as public third-party attestations, third-party security compliance certifications are not required.
95	N/A	What is the estimated budget allocated for this project including hosting and maintenance?	Budget is not available.
96	N/A	What are the requirements for analytics and reporting? Are there specific metrics or KPIs that need to be tracked and reported?	We currently have Google Analytics and would like to continue that practice.
97	ATTACH B	What specific security measures are required to protect sensitive data and ensure the integrity of the website?	We currently use Wordfence for WAF and SFA. It would be great to have similar established in the new Drupal site.
98	N/A	Do you require AI support with any of the website functionality? If yes, can we please have more information?	No.
99	N/A	Are there any incumbent vendors participating in this RFP?	No incumbent.
100	N/A	What is the allocated budget for this project?	Budget not available.

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101	N/A	Who designed and developed the current website?	A former employee.
102	N/A	If there is an incumbent, what are the drivers to consider other design and development agencies?	No incumbent
103	N/A	Could you clarify how the RFP was developed? Specifically, were any external consultants or vendors involved in drafting or providing guidance on its content?	No external consultants were part of this process. Museum staff was lead through the drafting process by members of our Department of Information Technology.
104	N/A	Is there a preference for local vendors?	No
105	N/A	What was the cost incurred for the design and development of the current website?	Not available
106	N/A	What is your current annual spend on hosting?	Not available
107	N/A	What is your current annual spend on support?	Not available
108	N/A	Can you elaborate on the current challenges with the site?	It's outdated. We don't like Wordpress. We want a fresh start with the content and better means of organizing and displaying it.
109	3.5	What are the expectation for uptime guarantees?	<p>We expect a high level of uptime across all websites and related subsites. For the main NCMNS website and any associated subsites, we would require an uptime SLA of 99.9% or higher to ensure reliability and minimize downtime. This is critical for maintaining a seamless user experience, particularly for event bookings, donations, and general public access.</p> <p>If any subsites have different usage or traffic patterns, we may adjust the SLA slightly based on their specific requirements. However, the goal is to maintain a consistent level of reliability across all sites.</p>
110	N/A	Are there any specific mobile device types or OS versions that must be prioritized?	Our only priority is that the site be mostly mobile friendly.
111	3.3	Do you require API level integrations for any of the listed third-party applications or is it just hyperlinking?	Yes.
112	N/A	What specific metrics and KPIs are being used to measure website success?	Currently this is fairly undefined for us. We have an extremely bloated site that is difficult to navigate, so outside of big picture analytics that we get from google, metrics aren't super useful to us in analyzing success.
113	N/A	Do you have an internal technical team responsible for website development?	Yes.

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114	2.3	Do you have any specific design preferences (websites you like), or are we free to create a modern UI?	We certainly have example sites we like but are not wedded to any particular design. We do have certain priorities that need to be placed above design, mainly WCAG compliance. Example sites: https://naturalhistory.si.edu/ & https://nmaahc.si.edu/ ; https://nhmu.utah.edu/ & https://bouldercolorado.gov/ ; https://georgia.gov/ & https://www.michaeljfox.org/
115	N/A	Do you need localization? Which specific languages do you need for localization?	We currently have a Spanish version of the website available. While full localization may not be required right now, we are open to expanding language support if needed in the future.
116	N/A	Is original content creation expected within the scope?	No.
117	3.5	How many users are required to be trained?	Our internal tech team—a group consisting of two, maybe three people—will need to be trained such that they can manage site processes as administrators typically do. Our team of site administrators will undertake the training of on-staff content creators and editorial users.
118	N/A	How frequently does site content change?	Blog posts, press releases, and events update weekly if not daily. Informational pages stay mostly static.
119	N/A	What is the total number of pages currently? More specifically, how many templates do you have currently?	Over 2,000, most of which will not be migrated. As it pertains to templates, this is extremely bloated and we want to use the new site build as an opportunity to reset, economize, and increase efficiency.
120	N/A	Can you share website traffic statistics? How many visits per year, average monthly page views etc.?	2.1 million total page views, 650k users last year; average of 175k view per month.
121	ATTACH B	"Vendor(s) shall pay a transaction fee of 1.75%" - Does this apply to this project?	The 1.75% fee only applies to purchase of goods.
122	3.5	Do you prefer a tailored solution or off-the-shelf products for this project?	We'd prefer to refine an off-the-shelf product to meet our needs.
123	N/A	Do you have a preference for CMS?	Ideally the new site would be built on Drupal 11.
124	7.1	Is there a preference for where the vendor resources are located, US vs offshore?	No preference, however, review Section 7.1 and Security of State Data.
125	2.6	How many vendors do you anticipate awarding contracts to?	One (1).
126	N/A	What key elements of branding or visual identity are crucial to retain?	We have brand guidelines for the institution but want to revisit guidelines for the website itself.

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127	N/A	Are there any hard deadlines or significant events driving the schedule?	Our preference would be to have a new site up and running within a calendar year from the start of work.
128	3.5	Where will assets like photography, video, etc. come from? Is there an existing content library for photos or videos?	We do have archives of visual elements, but no DAM.
129	3.5	Do you expect audience research and user testing to be a part of this project?	Some amount of audience research and user testing is expected but is undefined by the RFP. We anticipate working with the vendor to cooperatively plan for a reasonable amount of research and testing.
130	N/A	Could you briefly describe the existing personas in place for your primary target audiences?	No existing personas. Our primary target audience is museum visitors (whether general public or school groups), followed by site users who wish to learn about programs and events. We hope to further define user audiences with the vendor.
131	2.3	Can you please describe your high-level goals for the website redesign? What does success look like? What pain points are you hoping to resolve from the current site?	The site has become quite bloated over the years--too much content, bad main navigation, too many clicks to get to desired information, poor end-user experience overall. Taxonomies aren't properly organized, too many content types, extremely long forms with several unused fields. The BIG issue is that some of our content is in Wordpress, but much of the "static" content and new webpage creation is conducted in php in server files. It's extremely inefficient, creates significant errors in information display, and requires incredible amounts of staff time for maintenance. For museum staff who interact with the site, we need all content in one platform, with the ability to track workflows, while providing each person a log in with permissions tailored to the internally defined access roles.
132	2.3	Are there any museum sites you view as aspirational or are there things you'd like to use as inspiration in the redesign process?	We certainly have example sites we like but are not wedded to any particular design. We do have certain priorities that need to be placed above design, mainly WCAG compliance. Example sites: https://naturalhistory.si.edu/ & https://nmaahc.si.edu/ ; https://nhmu.utah.edu/ & https://boulder.colorado.gov/ ; https://georgia.gov/ & https://www.michaeljfox.org/
133	2.3	What are the most important KPIs you're hoping to affect with this redesign? Are there measurable things we can use to determine whether we have been successful or not?	Honestly, no. Our main goal is to drastically improve visitor experience and to bring the editorial interface into modern practice.
134	2.3	Do you have any current technical preferences or CMS platform preferences?	Drupal 11.
135	N/A	Are there any launch deadlines or aspirational target dates for having the new site online?	We hope to have a new site delivered within a calendar year from the start of work.

Question #	Document Section	Vendor Question	State's Response
136	2.4	Are there any tentpole events or major milestones for the NC Museum of Natural Sciences that will affect the delivery of this project?	No.
137	2.4	How soon do you hope to commence the redesign process?	As soon as a vendor has been selected.
138	2.1	How many stakeholders will be involved in the website redesign, development, and build process? Please provide an idea of the team roles involved from NC Department of Natural and Cultural resources, as well as the rough percentage of availability each team member will have devoted to this project.	The main team consists of Kerry Irish, Project Manager; Jessica Bandel, Web Designer; and Aris Moratalla, Technology Information Coordinator. It is expected that this team will serve as the intermediary between the vendor and internal stakeholders so that the vendor will have a dedicated group with which to reliably work.
139	2.1	Who will have ability to approve design and product related decisions?	The main team named above.
140	2.1	How many people will be logging in as editors or administrative users of the site?	Probably no more than 5 admins, and between 30 and 50 editorial users
141	N/A	Are there any funding limitations or is there budget guidance you can share?	Budget not available.
142	N/A	As a frame of reference, what did the last redesign of this site cost, and did you feel this budget was adequate to achieve your organization's goals?	Not available.
143	N/A	Can you share the current website's network architecture and tech stack?	The current website is built on PHP-based codebase, with certain sections (such as events) implemented using WordPress CMS; LeaseWeb- Apache, PHP, MySQL and Cpanel & WHM for management; and The Events Calendar plugin (WordPress) for events management.
144	N/A	What CMS is currently powering the site?	Wordpress.
145	N/A	How is hosting currently managed?	Currently, the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences' website is hosted by LeaseWeb. The existing infrastructure primarily consists of a traditional web hosting setup, though we are evaluating potential changes as part of the redevelopment process.
146	N/A	Is the NC Museum of Natural Sciences looking to move to a third-party hosting solution?	No.
147	N/A	Is the NC Museum of Natural Sciences looking to continue using its CMS or would like an alternate solution?	We want to start fresh with a site built on Drupal 11.

Question #	Document Section	Vendor Question	State's Response
148	N/A	Our firm works with a variety of technologies. Is the NCMNS open to the vendor working with the museum to select a CMS and related technologies that would be the right fit for the NCMNS rather than predetermining a technical solution in the proposal?	As the rest of state government uses a Drupal-based platform, it behooves us in many ways to do the same, and we are fairly set upon this decision.
149	N/A	Does the NC Museum of Natural Sciences have existing brand guidelines?	We have brand guidelines for the institution but want to revisit guidelines for the website itself with the chosen vendor.
150	2.1	How many individuals comprise the NC Museum of Natural Sciences current web team? What are their current technical capabilities?	2-3 people with support from the state's DIT. The main team consists of Kerry Irish, Project Manager; Jessica Bandel, Web Designer; and Aris Moratalla, Technology Information Coordinator. Another tech member may join down the road.
151	2.1	Can you share the composition and roles of the individuals at NC Museum of Natural Sciences who will be working on this website refresh project with the vendor?	2-3 people with support from the state's DIT. The main team consists of Kerry Irish, Project Manager; Jessica Bandel, Web Designer; and Aris Moratalla, Technology Information Coordinator. Another tech member may join down the road.
152	N/A	Has initial user research been conducted on the current use of the website?	No.
153	N/A	Can we assume that the store (https://store.naturalsciences.org/) is out of scope for this RFP?	Yes. It's provided by Shopify.
154	N/A	Can we assume that the online collections (https://collections.naturalsciences.org/) is out of scope for this RFP?	Yes. It's a totally different platform within the site.
155	N/A	Can we assume that the ticketing system (ticketapp.org) is out of scope apart from a re-skin (bearing in mind limitations set by the ticketing vendor)?	Yes.
156	3.5	What kinds of integrations are on the existing website?	Information about integrations found in section C14 of RFP.
157	3.5	Will content migration be done internally or will the vendor be responsible for content migration?	Our goal is to create all new content to populate the new site. We aim to have finalized content ready to go by that point in the process; whether we have the vendor migrate it or handle that ourselves, we can be flexible with the decision.
158	N/A	Does the NC Museum of Natural Sciences have resources on hand for copywriting and asset generation (e.g. creation of new images/video) if needed?	Yes.
159	3.5	What expectations does the NC Museum of Natural Sciences have for post-launch maintenance and support?	We anticipate routine maintenance to be more or less handled in-house. However, we do see a need for higher level technical support to be conducted by an outside vendor. The process of procuring that support will be separate from this one.

Question #	Document Section	Vendor Question	State's Response
160	N/A	Can you describe the impetus behind NC Museum of Natural Sciences' desire to create a new site? Generally, what kind of pain points are website administrators trying to solve and/or what kinds of pain points are users experiencing?	The site has become quite bloated over the years--too much content, bad main navigation, too many clicks to get to desired information, poor end-user experience overall. Taxonomies aren't properly organized, too many content types, extremely long forms with several unused fields. The BIG issue is that some of our content is in Wordpress, but much of the "static" content and new webpage creation is conducted in php in server files. It's extremely inefficient, creates significant errors in information display, and requires incredible amounts of staff time for maintenance. For museum staff who interact with the site, we need all content in one platform, with the ability to track workflows, while providing each person a log in with permissions tailored to the internally defined access roles.
161	N/A	Given the current federal budget cuts, is this project at financial risk?	No.
162	N/A	Does the NCMNS have an anticipated launch date in mind or is the launch date flexible?	Our preference would be to have a new site up and running within a calendar year from the start of work, but we can be reasonably flexible. We do want to ditch this current site ASAP.
163	3.5	Regarding (A4: Allows authorized Editors to import selected calendar events on the backend of the Website.): can NCMNS elaborate on what formats/processes they are imagining in terms of importing calendar events into the website?	Essentially, we need a Drupal compatible version of Events Calendar Pro. We need to be able to create one-off events via custom forms but also create recurring series of events such that editors only have to input that data one time (if that makes sense). This can probably also be achieved via an "Events" Content Type with a display via View Block/ Page that allows for user filtering and sorting.
164	3.5	Regarding (A5: Allows authorized Editors to export events into various formats to be able to store the details of those events off the Website.): can NCMNS elaborate on what formats/processes they are imagining in terms of exporting calendar events from the website?	Internal planning documentation indicates that exporting capabilities are needed for "external calendars and/ or social media platforms."
165	3.5	Regarding (J1: Response times for documents and files upload and download speed.): can NCMNS elaborate on what kinds of files are envisioned to be uploaded and downloaded from the website?	Mainly web-friendly images and text, but also other forms of content, mainly PDFs and audio/ video files.

Question #	Document Section	Vendor Question	State's Response
166	N/A	The current website appears to be built on WordPress. Is DNCR's preference to stay on the WordPress platform? If you are open to or would prefer a different CMS, can you identify any pain points with your current content management experience?	Our preferred CMS is Drupal, hopefully 11, and we are fairly set on this decision as the rest of state government's web presence is Drupal - based. As it pertains to painpoints, the site has become quite bloated over the years--too much content, bad main navigation, too many clicks to get to desired information, poor end-user experience overall. Taxonomies aren't properly organized, too many content types, extremely long forms with several unused fields. The BIG issue is that some of our content is in Wordpress, but much of the "static" content and new webpage creation is conducted in php in server files. It's extremely inefficient, creates significant errors in information display, and requires incredible amounts of staff time for maintenance. For museum staff who interact with the site, we need all content in one platform, with the ability to track workflows, while providing each person a log in with permissions tailored to the internally defined access roles.
167	N/A	Does DNCR have a brand guide for NCMNS the selected vendor would be expected to use in creating the site design?	We have brand guidelines for the institution but want to revisit guidelines for the website itself with the chosen vendor.
168	3.5	Roughly how many people at DNCR/NCMNS edit or otherwise manage content on the website?	Probably no more than 5 admins, and between 30 and 50 editorial users.
169	3.5	Will the selected vendor be responsible for writing or editing website content?	No.
170	N/A	Has DNCR conducted any user research or other discovery research to date? If so, can they share any relevant findings?	We do not have any user research; however, we do have internally generated documents that attempt to define editorial needs, administrative needs, and user stories.
171	N/A	Can DNCR share any website analytics (unique visitors per month, page views per month, etc.)?	2.1 million total page views, 650k users last year; average of 175k view per month. We're happy to share more nuanced analytics with the selected vendor at the start of the project.
172	2.3	Are there any noteworthy museum websites or other peer website that DNCR considers best in class	We certainly have example sites we like but are not wedded to any particular design. We do have certain priorities that need to be placed above design, mainly WCAG compliance. Example sites: https://naturalhistory.si.edu/ & https://nmaahc.si.edu/ ; https://nhmu.utah.edu/ & https://bouldercolorado.gov/ ; https://georgia.gov/ & https://www.michaeljfox.org/
173	2.2	What sets the NC Museum of Natural Sciences apart from other museums?	The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences is the states' oldest, most visited, and largest museum. We are free. We are collections-based – which means we have the largest scientific collection in the southeast United States. Our mission is to illuminate the natural world and inspire its conservation.

Question #	Document Section	Vendor Question	State's Response
174	2.3	Do you have any specific goals for the new website, e.g., increase donations, more memberships, better showcase exhibitions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase user friendliness. - modernize, simplify, and make accessible. - ensure the daily maintenance / care & feeding of the site is able to be accomplished by Museum staff. - make site with the guest experience in mind, and not a catch all for staff needs. - increase membership/visitation.
175	2.3	Are there any museum websites, or tangentially related websites that might serve as inspiration/reference for the new website?	<p>We certainly have example sites we like but are not wedded to any particular design. We do have certain priorities that need to be placed above design, mainly WCAG compliance.</p> <p>Example sites: https://naturalhistory.si.edu/ & https://nmaahc.si.edu/; https://nhmu.utah.edu/ & https://boulder.colorado.gov/; https://georgia.gov/ & https://www.michaeljfox.org/</p>
176	N/A	Who built and currently maintains your existing website?	A member of staff, who has since separated from the museum, built the current site about a decade ago. Current maintenance is handled by two extremely new-to-the-museum employees.
177	3.5	What are the most popular parts of the website?	<p>A: Top five page view stats for the last calendar year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Home page—459k views 2. Hours & Admission—137k 3. Upcoming Events Programs & Events Calendar—107k 4. Special Exhibitions—52k 5. Plan Your Visit—51k
178	2.3	What are the key pain points with the current site that need to be addressed (both internally and customer facing)?	The site has become quite bloated over the years--too much content, bad main navigation, too many clicks to get to desired information, poor end-user experience overall. Taxonomies aren't properly organized, too many content types, extremely long forms with several unused fields. The BIG issue is that some of our content is in Wordpress, but much of the "static" content and new webpage creation is conducted in php in server files. It's extremely inefficient, creates significant errors in information display, and requires incredible amounts of staff time for maintenance. For museum staff who interact with the site, we need all content in one platform, with the ability to track workflows, while providing each person a log in with permissions tailored to the internally defined access roles.
179	N/A	Currently, visitors can either sign up for an annual membership or purchase tickets to one off events. Do you plan on changing programming/pricing structure in the future?	Programming is always changing & pricing will change over time. Membership benefits will also fluctuate with time. However, with our current knowledge, we plan to continue having Member benefits that provide some free experiences (e.g. the special exhibits) and allow nonmembers to pay for these experiences.

Question #	Document Section	Vendor Question	State's Response
180	N/A	What is the current website's CMS, hosting environment, and technology stack?	The current website is built on PHP-based codebase, with certain sections (such as events) implemented using WordPress CMS; LeaseWeb- Apache, PHP, MySQL and Cpanel & WHM for management; and The Events Calendar plugin (WordPress) for events management.
181	3.4	Do you have any preferences around CMS, hosting, and tech stack for new site?	We prefer Drupal and aim to keep with our current hosting arrangement.
182	N/A	Roughly how many visitors does the website get on a monthly basis? How many visitors does the museum itself see?	NCMNS, across its five locations, sees over a million visitors a year.
183	3.5	What does the demographic breakdown of museum visitors look like? How do you keep track of and analyze this information currently? Are you using any analytics platforms? What % of members renew each year?	Currently we do not have access to that information but our marketing team is planning for increased membership/visitation assessment so that we can better meet our needs of our guests.
184	3.5	Do you have an existing content structure that will be carried over, or is a full content strategy redesign needed?	We are in the process of redesigning content currently but absolutely welcome the counsel of the selected vendor. Content redesign is a high priority for our group, but we have so far handled this internally; outside guidance would certainly be welcome.
185	N/A	Will you require any assistance with copywriting?	No.
186	N/A	Do you have existing brand guidelines, design assets, or style preferences?	We have brand guidelines for the institution but want to revisit guidelines for the website itself.
187	3.5	The RFP mentions external systems like Blackbaud, Jotform, and NeoGov—what level of integration is required (e.g., API connections, embedded widgets, data syncing)?	JotForm - Embedding forms and API (if needed).
188	3.5	Are there any additional third-party systems or databases that need to be integrated?	More information about integrations found in section C14 of RFP.
189	3.5	What level of control do different user roles (e.g., editors, admins) need over the website content? How many CMS users do you anticipate?	Probably no more than 5 admins, and between 30 and 50 editorial users. We have drafted (currently) three different user roles with site appropriate permissions: a small, selective group; content creators (those who create drafts of content); and editors (those who approve content for publication). That's how we see it currently, but we're open to guidance/ counsel of the selected vendor.
190	N/A	Will there be a need for multi-language support or content localization?	In an ideal world, we'd use Drupal core's Language Module to translate content at least into Spanish. We are open to further discussion/ guidance on this issue.

Question #	Document Section	Vendor Question	State's Response
191	3.5	How much existing content will need to be migrated, and in what formats? Will the museum provide structured data exports for content migration, or will vendors need to extract and transform content from the current website?	We see this new site as an opportunity for a completely fresh start, meaning all new in-house created content. If a vendor were to provide the ideal import set up, I'm sure our team could meet that.
192	N/A	Are there any specific SEO requirements or existing rankings that need to be preserved during the migration?	No.
193	N/A	Are there any general deadlines for launch (e.g., aligned with an event or fiscal year)?	Our preference would be to have a new site up and running within a calendar year from the start of work.
194	N/A	What is the allocated budget range for this project?	Budget is not available.
195	2.6	Can you clarify whether the terms outlined in the RFP are considered final upon contract award, or if there will be an opportunity to discuss and negotiate certain provisions before execution?	There will be an opportunity to discuss and negotiate certain provisions before execution of the contract.
196	2.3	Are there any unique UX/UI preferences based on audience research (e.g., simplified navigation for children or older visitors)?	No preferences currently but we are willing to walk through such a conversation with the chosen vendor.
197	N/A	Will we be able to conduct user testing sessions with staff, educators, or the general public before launch?	Certainly with staff and educators. We will probably need to chat about user testing with the public.
198	N/A	The RFP does not mention multilingual capabilities. Should the new website support languages other than English?	In an ideal world, we'd use Drupal core's Language Module to translate content at least into Spanish. We are open to further discussion/guidance on this issue.
199	N/A	Will the museum provide alt text and transcripts for existing media, or will the vendor need to create them?	We will provide this content.
200	N/A	Should the vendor propose a new site structure (navigation, categories, and taxonomy), or should the current structure be maintained?	We are open to an entirely new approach, so long as it abides best practices, accessibility standards, etc.
201	N/A	Will the vendor be responsible for reviewing and recommending content updates, or will this be handled internally?	This will be handled internally.
202	N/A	Should all existing content be migrated, or will certain sections be pruned, consolidated, or rewritten?	We see this new site as an opportunity for a completely fresh start, meaning all new in-house created content.
203	N/A	What is the expected volume of content? (Pages, media files, daily/weekly updates?)	We are in this process now, of creating finalized content, and so numbers are not currently available.
204	3.5	Does the team require a structured content workflow (approval processes, multi-user editing)?	Yes.
205	N/A	Will the museum provide images, videos, and other media, or is content creation included in the scope?	Yes.

Question #	Document Section	Vendor Question	State's Response
206	2.3	The RFP says, "NCMNS's current website no longer functions to suit the needs of the organization." Can you be specific as to the current issues with the website? Are the issues functional or technical?	The site has become quite bloated over the years--too much content, bad main navigation, too many clicks to get to desired information, poor end-user experience overall. Taxonomies aren't properly organized, too many content types, extremely long forms with several unused fields. The BIG issue is that some of our content is in Wordpress, but much of the "static" content and new webpage creation is conducted in php in server files. It's extremely inefficient, creates significant errors in information display, and requires incredible amounts of staff time for maintenance. For museum staff who interact with the site, we need all content in one platform, with the ability to track workflows, while providing each person a log in with permissions tailored to the internally defined access roles.
207	3.4	What are the current hosting pain points? (E.g., performance, security, scalability)	We are currently hosted by LeaseWeb through the state and will remain in this arrangement with the new site.
208	3.4	Should the new website support a hybrid or multi-cloud environment?	Multi-cloud with redundancy and failover.
209	N/A	How many annual page views do you expect for this solution?	We don't know how many to expect but for the last calendar year we had 2.1 million total page views, 650k users last year, for an average of 175k views per month.
210	N/A	How many web domains do you require for this solution?	Two (naturalsciences.org and ncmns.net).
211	N/A	How much data storage is used for the system today (documents and database)?	Approximately 150GB for files and 260GB for database.
212	N/A	How many users do you expect to login to the solution each month?	Probably no more than 5 admins, and between 30 and 50 editorial users. We have drafted (currently) three different user roles with site appropriate permissions: a small, selective group; content creators (those who create drafts of content); and editors (those who approve content for publication). That's how we see it currently, but we're open to guidance/ counsel of the selected vendor.
213	N/A	What is the expected traffic load, and are there seasonal spikes?	In regard to seasonal spikes, last calendar year we had a spike around the time of one of our most successful programs called BugFest, that drew thousands more users than any other time that year.
214	N/A	Should the site support multi-tenancy? (e.g., different museum branches or initiatives under one platform)	This feature should be available in case we move to that direction.
215	N/A	Are there plans for mobile app integration in the future?	There are no current plans for mobile app integration, but we are prioritizing a fully mobile-responsive design for the new website.

Question #	Document Section	Vendor Question	State's Response
216	N/A	Who are the main stakeholders for this project?	We are meeting with internal stakeholders—such as our Friends Group, director's office, event programmers, and content creators—now in order to have a good understanding of their needs/ wants at the outset of the process. We expect the central on-staff site team to serve as intermediaries between stakeholders and the vendor.
217	N/A	The procurement schedule does not include a project completion deadline. Is there a target launch date, or will this be determined during contract negotiations?	Our preference would be to have a new site up and running within a calendar year from the start of work.
218	2.4	Given that the contract term is one year with two optional renewals (Section 2.4), has funding already been secured for the full duration, or is renewal contingent on additional approvals?	The renewal is contingent on additional approvals.
219	3.5	How advanced should the search functionality be? (Basic keyword, AI-driven, faceted search?)	A faceted search is the ideal.
220	N/A	Are there plans for AI-based recommendations or chatbot assistants?	No.
221	3.5	Are there specific requirements for Disaster Recovery & Business Continuity?	We would prioritize the following key areas: Data Protection and Backup, RTO & RPO, Infrastructure redundancy, Cyber Security and Incident Response.
222	3.5	The RFP outlines calendar functionality requirements (Section 3.5, Section A). Does the museum have an existing calendar system that needs integration, or is a new calendar system expected to be built?	The events section is hosted on a WordPress platform and is primarily powered by the Events Calendar plugin. We hope to transition to similar plugin or module on Drupal.
223	N/A	Should the website support Single Sign-On (SSO) and identity management? (Azure AD, Okta, etc.?)	Yes, to streamline user access.
224	N/A	Are there legacy systems that need to be maintained or transitioned?	We have existing systems directly linked from the current website. We will do the same for the new website.
225	2.3	Are there any branding, color, or design guidelines that must be followed? If so, who currently manages that documentation?	We have brand guidelines for the institution but want to revisit guidelines for the website itself.
226	2.3	If there aren't branding, color, or design guidelines, do you need the vendor to provide them as part of this project?	We absolutely welcome conversations regarding branding, especially as it pertains to WCAG/ accessibility compliance.
227	2.3	Who are the primary personas for the website? (Tourists, researchers, educators, children?)	We don't have defined personas per se, but we do have a "User Stories" matrix that internal experts have walked us through. We are happy to share this matrix with the selected vendor.

Question #	Document Section	Vendor Question	State's Response
228	2.3	What are the main things each primary persona comes to see (or do) on the website?	Our "User Stories" matrix mainly describes the editorial user side of the proposed site, but we do have analytical data that points to the priority demands of the site from the end-user's perspective. We're happy to share all of that data with the selected vendor.
229	2.3	What are the top 3 frustrations from users on the current website?	We currently do not have data from an end-users perspective, but we expect that navigation would be a top concern, followed by an overwhelming amount of content. From an editorial user's perspective, the biggest painpoint is the inefficient and difficult nature of simple text edits. Editors also need a workflow and a content table that aggregates all pending drafts in one spot for easy approval/ publication to the live site. Design tools that provided each content creator a little more control over the appearance of a webpage would also be ideal.
230	2.3	Has the museum conducted any research on the primary types of users (e.g., students, researchers, general visitors), and will that data be shared?	See answers above. Happy to share with the selected vendor all of the data we currently possess.

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