

**MARCH 1, 2024**

**MARYLAND STATE TREASURER'S OFFICE**

**Louis L. Goldstein Treasury Building  
80 Calvert Street, Room 109  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
FOR  
INVITATION FOR BIDS AGENCY WEBSITE DESIGN AND  
ENHANCEMENTS ON WORDPRESS PLATFORM  
FOR STATE TREASURER'S OFFICE**

**RFP #WD-02222024**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Reference if applicable</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>1</b>		Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)	The Contractor shall provide its services to the State and the State's end users solely from data centers in the U.S. Unless granted an exception in writing by the State, the Contractor shall not allow Contractor Personnel to store State data on portable devices, including personal computers, except for devices that are used and kept only at its U.S. data centers. The Contractor shall permit its Contractor Personnel to access State data remotely only as required to provide technical support.
<b>2</b>		Whether we need to come over there for meetings?	On rare occasions, there may be a need to come to the Annapolis, MD location, but this would be a very rare circumstance.
<b>3</b>		Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)	See response to question #1

4	Pg. iii	Can we submit the proposals via email?	See Section 5.5 Delivery.
5		Is this a new initiative? If not, would you please let us know the incumbent's details?	Yes. The STO recently moved its website platform to Wordpress. Our Office staff does not have the experience or expertise to perform the enhancements or design.
6		Is subcontracting allowed?	Yes, with approval from the STO
7		Will the agency consider references provided by both the prime contractor and subcontractors included in our proposal?	Yes
8		Can the project move from onshore to offshore?	See response to question #1
9		We would like to know if we are allowed to participate both as a prime contractor and as a subcontractor with other vendors/firms for this project.	Performance by your company can be either as a prime contractor or a subcontractor
10	§3.5.1 pg. 6	3.5.1 The following type(s) of insurance and minimum amount(s) of coverage are required: a) Commercial General Liability - of \$1,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for bodily injury, property damage, and personal and advertising injury and \$3,000,000 annual aggregate. The minimum limits required herein may be satisfied through any combination of primary and umbrella/excess liability policies. b) Errors and Omissions/Professional Liability - \$1,000,000 per combined single limit per claim and \$3,000,000 annual aggregate.	Refer to the link below regarding Competitive Sealed Bid requirements.  <a href="https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/14.27.03.07.aspx">https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/14.27.03.07.aspx</a>
11	§3.5.1 pg. 6	For a) and b), we have a \$2,000,000 dollar annual aggregate only. Any flexibility here?	Refer to the link below regarding Competitive Sealed Bid requirements.  <a href="https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/14.27.03.07.aspx">https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/14.27.03.07.aspx</a>

12	§3.5.1 pg. 6	We do not carry this type of insurance. Any flexibility here?	Refer to the link below regarding Competitive Sealed Bid requirements.  <a href="https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/14.27.03.07.aspx">https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/14.27.03.07.aspx</a>
13	§3.5.1 pg. 6	No trucks or commercial automobiles will be required for this contract. Ok to disregard or?	No
14	Cover pg.	Could you confirm what the budget is for this work?	Refer to the Title page of the IFB - This is a small procurement and not to exceed \$100,000.00
15		Could we request an extension to the submission deadline?	Refer to Section 4.4.2, Page 9.
16		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?	See answer to question #1
17		Could you let us know what the term of the contract is to be stemming from this procurement process	See section 3.1 Period of Performance, Page 42
18		Who is the incumbent?	See answer to question #5
19		Is the work to be performed onsite or remote	Remotely; On rare occasions, there may be a need to come to the Annapolis, MD location, but this would be a very rare circumstance.
20		Are the meetings to be held online or in person	See response to question #19
21	§2.3.1.5 pg. 3	What is the expected response time in resolving the tickets?	See Section 2.3 Responsibilities and tasks; Page 2
22		What is the tentative start of this project?	STO aims to have a Contract executed and work will begin no later than April 1, 2024.
23		Could you provide more details about the current technical environment, such as the specific version of Microsoft D365 being used, and any other relevant technology stacks?	STO has D365 Enterprise for Government. Our agency website and application web portals are based out of Azure App Services using Wordpress for primary website editing. We are also using Microsoft Defender for app and OS security.

24		How are the existing manual processes managed, and what specific workflows are envisioned to be integrated into the website?	The website has been developed. There will be continued development and enhancements to the site by the Contractor awarded for this project.
25		Can you provide insights into the anticipated growth of the agency and its impact on the website? Understanding scalability requirements will help ensure that the proposed solution can accommodate future needs effectively.	The Agency does not anticipate further growth over the term of this Contract. The Agency is currently just around 100 staff members.
26	§2.3.1.3 pg. 3	Could you clarify the approval process for purchasing plugins?	The Agency will work with the Contractor to prepare an agreed upon process for purchasing of plugins and other necessary purchases after official award.
27	§2.3.1.8 pg. 3	Are there any specific backup and disaster recovery requirements beyond monthly backups? Understanding the disaster recovery strategy will help ensure comprehensive data protection.	STO is able to restore full website functionality within approximately 48 hours. We are currently taking automated backups every hour.
28	§2.3.1.9 pg. 3	Could you provide more details about the performance metrics that need to be monitored and optimized?	The Agency will prepare a process for establishing performance metrics which will be shared with the Contractor upon award.
29		What are the reporting requirements for tracking progress and communicating updates?	The Agency will prepare a process for reporting requirements and update communications which will be shared with the Contractor upon award.
30	§2.3 pg. 2	Considering the tasks in section 2.3, would the Government be interested in allotting more hours to this contract if awarded? We worry that 480 hours is not enough hours to support this effort.	Not at this time.
31		In which WordPress Builder was the site developed? WP-Bakery? Elementor?	Elementor.
32		Is the website currently 508, WCAG 2.0, ADA compliant?	Yes.

33		What monitoring tools does STO use to monitor the WordPress site?	STO is currently using Azure Monitor for base monitoring. We expect the chosen vendor to offer recommendations for alerts, analytics and heartbeat monitoring to be available on the site, upon award.
34		Is the bidder responsible for Azure monitoring?	No
35	§2.3.1.5 pg. 3	What level of helpdesk support is required by the bidder?	See response to question #21
36		What is the process for deploying updates to the WordPress site? Are there staging instances?	Yes, there are staging instances. The Agency will work with the Contractor to prepare an agreed upon process for deploying updates onto the site.
37	§2.3.1.8 pg. 3	What level of backup is required and where are they stored?	See answer to question #27
38	§2.3.1.9 pg. 3	What is the required frequency for conducting performance analysis? Is this 24/7?	The STO would require an automated monitoring system of performance based on response times, at all times. Overall analytics and more in-depth performance monitoring would be required monthly.
39		Is STO using a specific (help) ticketing system? If so, which one?	Yes. ServiceDeskPlus
40		Approximately, how many help tickets pertaining to the website does STO receive in a week?	STO is unable to provide that information at this time. The ticket system is primarily used for update requests. The current ticketing system is not external so website fixes and design requests would be communicated via email.
41		Will the awardee be responsible for remedy issues or is that the responsibility of another team?	The awarded Contractor will work with the STO Information Technology team to resolve issues.
42		What are your SLAs?	SLA's will differ depending on the issue at hand.
43		How many issues, questions, bugs and enchantments typically come in a week?	This is a newly developed website so we are unable to provide a baseline at this time.

44		Who did the original design and development?	A&T Systems, Inc.
45		Why are you looking for a new vendor?	The STO is interested in performing a competitive procurement for this ongoing service.
46		Is there version control of the code?	Yes
47		Do you have any test plans, user stories or previous documents you will share with the winning bidder?	The awarded Contractor will receive all necessary documents/information upon official award.
48		On page iii it says "Primary Place of Performance: 80 Calvert Street....". We just wanted to confirm that this is not a project that needs to be completed on premises; and that it is ok for us to work from our offices in Baltimore.	See answer to question #19.
49		We did a site scan and see 49 pages, 51 PDF files and 1 custom app : Would you agree that this is representative of the site's size? Are there any hidden portals or other hidden content?	64 pages. Nothing hidden
50		Understanding that you would like past performance on Maryland state contracts, would you like that information for projects where were were a sub contractor (and completed the majority of the work?) in addition to projects we primed?	Yes.
51	§2.3.1 pg. 3	The successful bidder will only interact with the server as necessary for Website/WordPress specific initiatives and will not be responsible for the holistic maintenance of the Azure server environment and any additional applications that may reside there. Is that correct?	Correct. STO will be responsible for Azure maintenance.
52		What is the latest date STO desires the awarded vendor to start?	See answer to question #22.

53		Can STO provide insight into who the current incumbent or current website builder is/was?	See answer to question #5.
54		Was the current site tested for accessibility?	Yes.
55		What is STO's annual budget for the maintenance of this site?	See answer to question #14
56		Please confirm is the current website the IFB is speaking to: <a href="https://treasurer.state.md.us?">https://treasurer.state.md.us?</a>	Yes
57	§2.2 pg. 2	How is Microsoft D365 integrated if at all with the website?	STO has separate D365 portals but they are not integrated on the main website.
58	§2.2 pg. 2 / §2.3.1 pg. 3	Could STO give a brief example of some of the manual processes described in this section 2.2 as sections 2.3.1 does not clearly call out what is manual workflow vs an ideal workflow?	See answer to question #47
59		Are the workflows related to Azure related processes or Wordpress specific processes?	The primary website does not have Azure workflows. Development was done in Wordpress with various plugins
60		Does STO expect the vendor to cover the cost of Azure or any hosting/3rd party tools for STO?	No
61		Does STO already have a separate budget line item for website hosting or 3rd party(website related) tools and additional costs?	STO has the funding to support this project.
62	§2.3.1.2 pg. 3	How many stakeholders will the awarded vendor work with?	The awarded Contractor will receive all necessary documents/information upon official award.
63		Will STO provide 1 primary stakeholder that will serve as the product owner: The core stakeholder that will provide approval and acceptance of the work the vendor works on.	STO will provide a contact for this project and will be shared with the Contractor upon award.
64	§2.3.1.3 pg. 3	What current Wordpress plugins is STO using today?	Advanced custom fields, Duplicate Page, Elementor Pro, Folders Pro, Responsive Owl Carousel for Elementor, Smush, Solid Security Basic, Tablepress,

			Updraft Plus Backup/Restore, W3 Total Cache, WP File Manager, WP Mail SMTP
65		Are there any Wordpress Plugins STO has already identified it would like to add to the current site?	Not at this time.
66	§2.3.1.5 pg. 3	How are help desk tickets submitted today?	See answer to question #39
67		What system or 3rd party tool does STO use to manage helpdesk tickets	See answer to question #39
68	§2.3.1.7 pg. 3	can STO provide a link to the current Wordpress theme it is using or is it fully custom?	The awarded Contractor will receive all necessary documents/information upon official award.
69	§2.3.1.8 pg. 3	Will the vendor have full admin permissions to the Azure instance?	Permissions will be granted on an as-needed basis. The chosen vendor will not have full admin access to the Azure subscription.
70	§2.3.1.9 pg. 3	Is STO currently using any 3rd Party Site Analytic or accessibility tools?	No
71		As of today does STO have a sandbox or development environment currently in place? Where current development is built and tested before going to production (live site)?	Yes, STO has a separate deployment space used for development purposes. More can be created depending on circumstance.
72		Who will the vendor consult with to get access to the Azure environments?	STO Information Technology division will provide access to the necessary systems.
73		Does STO have a GitHub / GitLab repo where the code is stored?	No
74		What is STO's current deployment process? What is the current or previous process to launch new features to the site?	See answer to question #36
75		How many users site administrators / content editors have access to the site today?	The awarded Contractor will receive all necessary documents/information upon official award.
76		Are there any current content workflows built into the STO website?	Yes.
77		What is the latest wordpress version deployed on the STO website?	STO has the latest version of Wordpress 6.4.3



<b>78</b>		How often are the PDF's (reports) loaded to the site?	Upon completion and approval; as necessary.
<b>79</b>		How many visitors a month does the STO website receive?	We are unable to provide that information at this time.
<b>80</b>		Are there any key website features STO desires, however due to manpower and expertise have not implemented?	Not at this time.

**END OF FORM**