Public Engagement Tools
RFP Ad

The New River Valley Regional Commission (NRVRC) requests proposals from qualified firms to provide a public engagement software tool which will assist in community surveys, education, and outreach. The solution must be available to NRVRC, local partners, and the community as an online Software as a Service (SaaS) tool.

Proposals are due August 18, 2020 by 5 pm to cstraight@nrvrc.org. A PDF format of content is preferred. Links to websites and samples may be included in the PDF file.

Public Engagement Tools Request for Proposals

Introduction (purpose of project and RFP)

NRVRC is a Regional Planning Organization which is involved in many planning efforts in the New River Valley region of Southwest Virginia. It partners with local governments within the region and undertakes many types of local and regional projects such as downtown plans, comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and regional studies and plans. It also supports and manages various transportation, economic development, and housing programs. The NRVRC serves as a liaison between local, state, and federal governments, and provides planning services as requested by member organizations.

The primary purpose of the public engagement platform is to encourage citizen participation in our projects and programs, provide rich and intuitive tools for learning, and collect input. NRVRC would like to purchase a subscription which will allow our staff and staff from our member organizations to create, manage and publish discussion topics and surveys, which the public can respond to and interact with.

Scope of work

NRVRC seeks a provider to support the purposes described above. The scope of work will include a software service that will support, at a minimum, certain requirements detailed below and availability of technical support for a term of at least one year with annual renewal options.

The following list outlines the major requirements for the software and services:

Core Capability Requirements

1. Backend and Frontend: Secure web-based public engagement tool which must be fully hosted by the vendor. No additional hardware or software installation should be required.
2. Backend and Frontend: Ability to design, manage, and publish multiple discussion and survey topics for multiple organizations.
3. Backend: Ability to manually activate and deactivate topics and assign valid time periods for a topic.
4. Backend: Ability to organize surveys and topics with multiple levels of categories and ability quickly search topics by keywords and categories.
5. Backend: Ability to embed topics and surveys within external web pages hosted by NRVRC or partner organizations.
6. Backend and Frontend: Ability for participants to opt in for updates to the project web page and an accompanying administrative tool to send notifications of updates.
7. Backend and Frontend: Ability to moderate comments and remove inappropriate comments or messages. Comments which include one or more flagged words should be automatically deleted.

8. Ability to assign read/write privileges to different users for various projects and resources managed within the account.

Customizable Preferences

1. Backend: Readily available and customizable survey templates for community planning and development. Templates must be interactive, of high quality and visually appealing, and should be designed to immediately capture and retain the attention of end users.
2. Backend: Variety of stock images, infographics, videos, and other multimedia content in addition to the templates are also desirable.
3. Backend: The ability to upload and manage documents, images, videos, or other relevant content and utilize them within various surveys, topics and templates.
4. Backend: Ability to apply branding and logos within each survey or discussion topics as each topic could pertain to an individual member organization.

Data Management Capabilities

1. Backend: Ability to collect, manage and archive data on participation and survey responses, including multiple choice responses as well as narrative responses.
2. Backend: Ability to collect and report geographical locations from interactive maps as responses to topic questions. Such information can be collected as map markers, latitude/longitude coordinates, street addresses, lots, and sites so that they can be easily mapped and analyzed in GIS tools such as ArcGIS mapping software.
3. Backend: Ability to interactively analyze and visualize collected responses in tabular, graphical, and map formats. Support for summaries, reports and dashboards is also desired.
4. Backend: Collected data must be easily exportable to formats such as Microsoft Excel, CSV, and PDF formats.
5. Backend: Collected data must be stored securely and should be accessible only to NRVRC or partner organization users with authorized accounts.
6. Backend: Collected data must be considered proprietary to and solely owned by NRVRC and/or partner organization.
7. Backend: Content created or uploaded by NRVRC and/or partner organization must be considered proprietary to and solely owned by NRVRC and/or partner organization.

Help and Support

1. Backend: Online tutorials for tools - how to use features, create new surveys, downloading data to specific formats/layouts, etc.
2. Backend: Online and/or phone based technical support available during business hours in the eastern time zone.

Publishing and Sharing Content

1. Backend and Frontend: Ability to manage and publish modern web links (i.e. with title, summary, and image). Links should be sharable as emails or social media feeds or provided as navigational links in external web sites.

2. Backend and Frontend: Integration with major social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook with ability for end users to quickly share and "like" on those platforms.
3. Backend: Ability to import and export contact lists and use the lists for engagement outreach.

User Experiences

1. Backend and Frontend: The tools must be visually appealing and should effectively present text, images, graphs, maps, layouts, and videos.
2. Backend and Frontend: Must be compatible with modern web browsers in desktop, tablets and mobile devices. Must work well in Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge, and Apple Safari in both desktop and mobile environments. iOS and Android apps installable from app stores are desired but not required.
3. Frontend: Ability for survey participants to prioritize response options with drag and drop functionality or similar.
4. Backend: Ability to customize interactive maps with custom layers and annotations to enhance geographically based survey and discussion topics.
5. Frontend: ADA-compliant and conforming to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, if applicable.
6. Frontend: Participants should not be required to sign-in.
7. Frontend: Ability for survey participants to save and continue/submit later.
8. Frontend: Ability to host live online engagements/meetings with two-way communication (video, voice and chat).
9. Frontend: Ability to record online engagements/meetings which participants can access later.

Term of service

NRVRC seeks an on-call contract with the provider on an annual basis with the option for annual renewal.

Preferred qualifications

The successful proposer will meet the other requirements of this RFP. Additionally, the successful proposer will ideally have the following preferred qualifications.

- successful regional use of product
- proven deployment of product (for at least three comparable organizations)

Submittal Requirements

1. Overview of software solution (2 pages max)
2. Description of firm's customer support services (including on-demand tutorials in system functions and features and live support)
3. Identify how your software meets the requirements listed in the scope of work
4. Statement of Qualifications (2 pages max)

5. Provide 5 references and project examples similar in scope and nature of that requested in this RFP

Deadline to submit and how

Proposals will be received by August 18, 2020 at 5 pm. Any addenda to this RFP will be posted to www.nrvrc.org. It is the responsibility of the respondent to check for any addenda prior to submission. Submit your response to this proposal by email to Christy Straight at cstraight@nrvrc.org. Questions about the RFP may also be sent to this address.

Evaluation process

Proposals will be evaluated based on the required submittal elements above. Failure to provide the specific information requested will impact a respondent's score.

RFP Issued – July 17, 2020

Proposals due – August 18, 2020

Committee review with shortlist notification – September 1, 2020

Interviews and/or online demonstrations – week of September 14, 2020

Notification to successful proposer – September 28, 2020