

Request for Proposal RFP 26-712

The Housing Authority of Columbus, Georgia (HACG) is soliciting proposals for: Website Design and Development

DESCRIPTION: Interactive website design and development

RFP NUMBER: RFP 26-712

ISSUE DATE: October 1, 2026

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: October 30, 2026

PROPOSAL DUE TIME: 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

**DIRECT INQUIRIES TO: Terry Gallups
Procurement Manager
PO Box 630
Columbus, GA 31902
E-mail: RFPupdates@columbushousing.org**

All inquiries concerning this RFP must be made in writing to the Procurement Manager. Violation of the foregoing may result in disqualification of the Proposer to participate in this RFP. No oral conversations or agreements with any officer, agent, or employee of HACG regarding this RFP are authorized, and no other person other than the Procurement Manager shall affect or modify any terms of this RFP. Proposers may submit written questions concerning this RFP by mail or e-mail. Telephone inquiries will not be accepted.

HACG reserves the right to, and may, amend, modify, or cancel this RFP without prior notice, at any time, at its sole discretion. In the event that it becomes necessary to revise or supplement any part of this RFP, Contractor will be notified by phone or email. Additionally, HACG reserves the right to increase, reduce, add, or delete any item to this solicitation as deemed necessary where it is consistent with HACG's policies to do so.

HACG reserves the right to reject any and all bids where it is determined to be in the best interest of HACG to do so.

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR WEBSITE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

The mission of the Housing Authority of Columbus, Georgia (HACG) is to provide more quality affordable housing in various areas of our community that offer opportunities for individuals and families to become self-sufficient and improve their quality of life. HACG was created in 1938. HACG is a public body, both corporate and politic, governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners appointed to terms by the Mayor of the Columbus Consolidated Government. HACG is funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and various other funding sources. HACG currently provides rental assistance to over 4,300 units of housing and owns 183 units of market rate housing in Columbus, Georgia. HACG also provides all maintenance, management, financial, and administrative services for three small housing authorities located within a 50-mile radius of Columbus, Georgia. These small authorities each have fewer than 162 dwelling units.

In December 2012, HACG was awarded the Moving to Work (MTW) designation. The MTW contract has been extended to 2038, so MTW program activities will be a part of all years covered by this RFP.

NATURE OF SERVICES REQUIRED

1. General Requirements

The Housing Authority of Columbus, Georgia (HACG) invites qualified and experienced Contractors to submit a proposal to design, develop and launch a modern, accessible and user-friendly and easily maintainable website to serve HACG residents, applicants, partners and the community.

The Scope of Work is outlined in **Attachment A**.

The initial term of the contract will be for a minimum of two (2) years from the date the contract is executed between the Contractor and HACG.

HACG reserves the sole right and option to extend the contract in incremental terms of one (1) year each which, including the initial contract term, will not exceed a total of five (5) years.

Each proposal shall be for a Firm Fixed Price (FFP) agreement and the total price submitted shall be all-inclusive and not subject to adjustment for any reason. All costs, including labor, travel and miscellaneous fees must be factored into the bid pricing.

HACG will consider price increases for contract extensions beyond the original twenty-four (24) month contract period. Such price increases are normally attributed to an index (i.e., Consumer Price Index) and will be analyzed prior to contract extensions.

2. SCOPE OF WORK ATTACHEMENT A

The Housing Authority of Columbus, Georgia (HACG) invites qualified and experienced Contractors to submit a proposal to design, develop and launch a modern, accessible and user-friendly and easily maintainable website to serve HACG residents, applicants, partners and the community.

3. ADDITIONAL CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITY

The contractor is fully responsible for any damage of any kind whatsoever caused in whole or in part by the negligence, inappropriate actions or errors of its employees or agents. To the fullest extent permitted by law, the contractor shall indemnify and hold harmless HACG, HACG officers, directors, partners, employees and agents from and against any and all claims, costs, losses and damages (including but not limited to all fees and charges of attorneys and other professionals and all court or arbitration or other dispute resolution costs) caused by the negligent acts or omissions of the contractor or contractor's officers, directors, partners, employees and agents in the performance and furnishing of the contractor's services.

The successful Vendor shall not have the right to assign any right, nor delegate any duty for the work proposed pursuant to this RFP (including, but not limited to, selling or transferring the contract) without the prior written consent of the HACG CEO or designee, in his/her sole and absolute discretion. Any purported assignment of interest or delegation of duty, without the prior written consent of the HACG CEO or designee shall be void and may result in the cancellation of the contract with the HACG or may result in the full or partial forfeiture of funds paid to the successful Vendor as a result of the proposed contract; either as determined by the HACG CEO or designee.

4. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

Proposals must be received no later than **5:00 PM EST on October 30, 2026**.

Contractors may submit their proposals via email, mail, or hand delivery. Please adhere strictly to the following format requirements based on your chosen submission method:

A. Email Submissions (Preferred Method)

Email is the preferred method of submission. If submitting electronically, please follow these guidelines:

- **Deadline:** Electronic submissions must be received in the inbox by **5:00 PM EST on October 30, 2026**.

- **Email Address:** Send the completed proposal to:
 - RFPupdates@columbushousing.org.
- **Subject Line:** Use the format: *RFP 26-712 HACG Website Design and Development– (Contractor Name)*.
- **Format:** The proposal must be attached as a single, searchable PDF document.
- **Duplicate Copies:** Contractors who submit via email **do not** need to send hard copies.

B. Mail or Hand-Delivery Submissions (Hard Copies)

If you choose to submit a physical proposal via mail or hand delivery, you must submit one (1) original signed proposal plus four (4) identical hard copies (for a total of 5 physical copies).

Physical submissions must be delivered to the appropriate address below no later than 5:00 PM EST on October 30, 2026.

Physical submissions must have “*RFP 26-712 HACG Website Design and Development*” on the outside of the envelope.

- **By Mail (USPS):**
 The Housing Authority of Columbus, Georgia
 ATTN: Terry Gallups
 PO Box 630
 Columbus, Georgia 31902
- **By Hand-Delivery or Courier (UPS/FedEx):**
 The Housing Authority of Columbus, Georgia
 ATTN: Terry Gallups
 1000 Wynnton Road
 Columbus, GA 31906

Note: Late submissions, regardless of the delivery method, will not be accepted or considered for evaluation.

5. EVALUATION PROCESS AND CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

HACG will conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received. HACG will select the response that is most advantageous to HACG and enter into contract negotiations with the successful Contractor. If contract negotiations are unsuccessful, HACG will cease negotiations and begin negotiations with the next ranked Contractor and so on.

HACG, at its sole discretion, will use the following criteria in determining the most qualified contractor to perform the work for HACG:

- | | |
|--|----|
| • Project Delivery and Reliability | 20 |
| • Cost-effectiveness | 20 |
| • Technical Expertise and Capabilities | 30 |
| • Business Stability and References | 10 |
| • Risk and Compliance Factors | 20 |

HACG Reservation of Rights

HACG reserves the right to: (a) waive technicalities; (b) reject all proposals, in whole or in part, submitted in response to this RFP; (c) request clarifications from all contractors; and (d) request resubmissions from all contractors.

6. MANDATORY CONTRACTOR SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Bidders should submit the proposals in the following order:

- **Tab 1: Executive Summary** - High-level overview of the agency's understanding of HACG's digital goals and their unique creative and technical value proposition.
- **Tab 2: Company Qualifications** - Corporate profile, history of building accessible websites, technology partnership certifications and financial stability documentation.
- **Tab 3: Technical Plan & Schedule** - Methodology for user research, UX/UI design wireframing, frontend/backend engineering, content migration, QA testing, and a detailed project roadmap.
- **Tab 4: Relevant Experience & References** - Minimum of 3–5 case studies of web design and development projects of similar scope/complexity, including active URLs and client contact info.
- **Tab 5: Key Personnel Resumes** - Dedicated resumes for the Product Manager, Lead UX/UI Designer, and Senior Developers, demonstrating mastery of modern CMS platforms, security best practices, and ADA compliance.
- **Tab 6: Architecture & Security** - Summary of the proposed content management system (CMS), hosting infrastructure requirements, security protocols, and ongoing maintenance/support plans.

- **Tab 7: Quoted Cost of Services** - Itemized price proposal form, broken down by project milestones (e.g., Discovery & Wireframes, Development, Testing & Launch) and optional recurring licensing fees. **(Attachment B)**
- **Tab 8: Required HUD & Local Forms** - All signed compliance certifications, non-disclosure agreements, and proof of required cybersecurity and professional liability insurances, HUD form 5369, HUD form 5369A, HUD form 5369C, and HUD form 5370.

7. CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT

Each contractor must include in his/her proposal a certificate signed by a company officer indicating that neither it nor its principal is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency, **(HUD form 2992)**.

8. NON-COLLUSIVE AFFIDAVIT

Each contractor must also include in his/her proposal a signed non-collusive affidavit, a sworn statement that a bidder or Contractor attests to, stating they have not colluded with other bidders or Contractors in preparing their bid and that their bid is independent, **(HUD form 5369C)**.

9. PREVIOUS CONTRACT TERMINATION

The contractor must indicate whether they or any principal officers of the company have had any contract for the provision of products or services like those contemplated in this RFP terminated for default within the last five years. "Terminated for default" shall mean that a notice to stop performance was delivered to the contractor or any of its principal officers due to the contractor's or any principal officers' non-performance or inferior performance. If the contractor has had a contract terminated for default in this period, then the contractor must submit full details including the other party's name, address, and telephone number, and whether the issue of performance was either:

- Not litigated due to inaction on the part of the contractor, or
- Litigated and determined that the contractor was in default, or
- Litigated and determined that the contractor was not in default, or
- Not litigated and settled out of court

10. WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSALS

Proposals submitted earlier may be withdrawn by the contractor prior to the proposal due date specified in this RFP. After the proposal's due date, the proposals cannot be withdrawn by the contractor prior to the award.

11. ACCEPTANCE OF RFP TERMS

Once the proposal's due date has passed, a proposal submitted in response to this RFP shall constitute a binding offer. A submission in response to this RFP acknowledges acceptance by the contractor of all terms and conditions of participation in this procurement as set forth in this RFP. The contractor, by signing the letter of the proposal, certifies that it accepts all of the terms and conditions of participation in this procurement as set forth in this RFP, in full, without reservations, limitations, assumptions, restrictions, caveats, or any other type of qualification, except for those noted in writing and submitted in the proposal.

12. COST OF THE PREPARATION

HACG accepts no obligation for costs incurred by any contractor in the preparation of a response to this RFP.

13. RFP RESPONSE MATERIAL OWNERSHIP

All material submitted regarding the RFP becomes the property of HACG and will not be returned to the contractor.

14. CONTRACT

HACG reserves the right to negotiate, delete or add other provisions consistent with the successful contractor's offer as needed to ensure that the final executed agreement accurately reflects the parties' intent, the procurement/lease, and the award. Any contract awarded under this RFP will be made in accordance with the provisions of this RFP.

Prior to the award, the apparent winning contractor may be required to enter discussions with HACG to resolve any contractual differences before an award is made. These discussions are to be finalized and all exceptions resolved with ten (10) business days of notification of intent to award or such other period mutually agreed to be the parties, if the negotiations are not finalized within such time frame, the proposal may be rejected and discussions may be initiated with the next highest scoring contractor as set forth in the RFP.

15. INSURANCE

Contractors must have and keep in force during the term of services the following insurance as a minimum and name HACG as an "Additional Insured" by endorsement to the policy.

- a. Minimum Commercial General Liability Insurance of \$1,000,000.
- b. Professional Liability of \$1,000,000
- c. Worker's Compensation and Employers' Liability of \$100,000.
- d. Cyber Liability/Media Liability of \$1,000,000.

Provide HACG one certified copy of the insurance policy(ies) prior to commencement on the work or services to be provided.

16. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Provide a statement of your firm's affirmative action policy. Prior to being awarded a contract, the contractor will provide HACG with an acceptable Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employment Plan that documents all necessary and required steps to assure equal opportunity under the law.

17. ADVERTISING

In submitting a proposal, the contractor agrees not to use the results from it as a part of any commercial advertising.

18. NOTICES

All notices, demands, requests, and claims pertaining to the award of this RFP must be addressed via email or in writing to:

Terry Gallups
Procurement Manager
The Housing Authority of Columbus, Georgia
PO Box 630
Columbus, GA 31902
tgallups@columbushousing.org

Any actual or prospective contractor may protest the solicitation or award of a contract. All protests of the solicitation must be received ten (10) days prior to the proposal closing date. An actual or prospective contractor has ten (10) days to protest after the basis of the protest is known or after the actual or prospective contractor is notified of the award. All bid protests shall be in writing, submitted to the Procurement Manager, who shall issue a written decision on the matter. The Chief Executive Officer may, at his/her discretion, suspend the procurement pending resolution of the protest, if warranted by the facts presented.

19. COMPLIANCE WITH LAW

The contractor shall comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, ordinances, and requirements applicable to the work described herein, including, but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Georgia Open Records Act. The contractor shall obtain, at the contractor's expense, all permits, certificates, and professional licenses required to legally perform the work specified.

GEORGIA IMMIGRATION & E-VERIFY COMPLIANCE NOTICE

Contractors submitting bids, proposals, or quotes to the Housing Authority of Columbus, GA (HACG) acknowledge that this project is subject to the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act (O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91). No covered contract for the physical performance of services exceeding \$2,499.99 will be executed, nor will a Purchase Order be released, until immigration compliance documentation is provided and approved by HACG.

- Registered Contractors: Must provide a completed, notarized Contractor Affidavit verifying active registration and participation in the Federal Work Authorization Program (E-Verify).
- Private Employers (10 or Fewer Employees): Must execute and submit the formal HACG Private Employer Exemption Affidavit along with a photocopy of an approved, secure, and verifiable state-issued identification document (per O.C.G.A. § 50-36-2).
- Licensed Professionals (Individual Sole Proprietors): Individuals operating as sole proprietors under O.C.G.A. Title 26, O.C.G.A. Title 43, or the State Bar of Georgia are exempt from submitting an affidavit and must instead provide a verified copy of their active state professional license.

Failure to provide compliant immigration or exemption documentation within the requested timeframe will result in immediate disqualification of the Contractor's submission.

20. CODE OF CONDUCT

No employee, officer, Commissioner, or agent of HACG shall participate in the selection or in the award or administration of any contract if a conflict, real or perceived, is involved. Such conflict would arise when a substantial financial or other interest in a firm selected is held by:

- a. An employee, officer, Commissioner, or agent involved in making the award.
- b. Any member of his/her immediate family.
- c. His/her partner.
- d. An organization in which any of the above is a partner, owner, or significant shareholder (i.e., controls more than 10% of outstanding stock).

HACG officers, commissioners, employees, or agents shall not solicit or accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from its Contractors, suppliers, contractors, potential contractors, or parties to subcontractors, and shall not knowingly use confidential information for actual or anticipated personal gain.

21. FUND LIMITATIONS

HACG will not be bound to any contract (in whole or in part) if HUD has disallowed funding.

22. GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS

In the event any governmental restrictions may be imposed which would necessitate alteration of the material, quality, workmanship or performance of the goods or services offered, it shall be the responsibility of the successful proposer to immediately notify HACG in writing, specifying the regulation which requires an alteration. HACG reserves the right to accept any such alteration, including any reasonable price adjustments occasioned thereby, or to cancel the contract at no expense to HACG.

END OF PROPOSAL

ATTACHEMENT A
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF COLUMBUS GA
RFP 26-712
WEBSITE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT
SCOPE OF WORK

Project Objective: To design and develop a modern, user-friendly, and highly interactive website that serves as a digital gateway for applicants, residents, landlords, and partners. The final product must achieve strict ADA/Section 508 compliance and utilize a flexible Content Management System (CMS) for easy internal maintenance

1. Discovery, Research & Housing Strategy

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Conduct workshops with HACG leadership, housing specialists, and community advocates to align on organizational goals.
- **Audience Persona Mapping:** Establish custom user journeys for distinct audiences: Low-Income Public Housing applicants, Housing Choice Voucher (HCV/Section 8) participants, property landlords, and real estate developers.
- **Language & Translation Strategy:** Architect a multi-language framework (e.g., integrating native translation or automated tools) to serve non-English speaking constituents.
- **Content & Document Audit:** Evaluate existing site assets, focusing on high-traffic PDF application forms, compliance documents, and administrative plans that need digital conversion.

2. Information Architecture (IA) & UX Design

- **Constituent-Centric Navigation:** Create a simplified, intuitive sitemap separating "Find Housing," "Current Residents," and "Landlord Partner" pathways.
- **Accessible Wireframing:** Build structural page blueprints focusing on clear typography, large touch targets, and cognitive readability for low-literacy users.
- **Interactive Prototyping:** Deliver clickable, low-fidelity mockups of interactive portals and tools to test ease-of-use before writing code.

3. Visual UI Design & Brand Trust

- **Inclusive Visual System:** Design an authoritative, clean design system with accessible typography, optimized contrast ratios, and clear focus states.
- **Responsive Interfaces:** Ensure 100% visual fidelity and full interactive usability across mobile phones, low-cost tablets, and desktop computers.
- **Dynamic Component States:** UI patterns for hover, focus, error, and active states tailored to guide users seamlessly through complex tasks.

4. Interactive HACG Tool Engineering

- **Interactive Program Wizard:** An interactive, step-by-step questionnaire (e.g., "Am I Eligible?") helping applicants quickly identify open waitlists and voucher criteria.
- **Predictive Smart Search:** A site-wide search engine featuring auto-suggested terms, synonym matching (e.g., "Section 8" matching "HCV"), and filtered results categorized by user type.
- **Dynamic Waitlist & Status Tracker:** A secure interface where applicants can check if waitlists are open, closed, or opening soon, with real-time status alerts.
- **Interactive Affordable Housing & Property Map:** A geolocated map tool integrated with the CMS allowing users to filter HACG properties by neighborhood, bedroom count, or amenity type.
- **Payment & Utility Calculators:** Interactive calculators enabling residents to estimate rent portions or landlords to check maximum allowable payment standards.
- **Centralized Event Calendar:** A filterable calendar system managing board meetings, resident council gatherings, and landlord briefings, with "add to calendar" and automated reminder functions.
- **Filterable Resource & Policy Directory:** A clean repository for standard operating procedures (SOPs), procurement RFPs, and resident forms, searchable by keyword, department, or topic.
- **Landlord & Tenant Portal Gateways:** Secure, intuitive pathways linking smoothly to external third-party software (e.g., Yardi, RealPage, Emphasys, or HMS) using clear single-sign-on (SSO) interfaces or custom link outs.

5. ADA, Section 508 & WCAG 2.2 AA Compliance

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Adhere strictly to WCAG 2.2 Level AA standards and federal Section 508 guidelines for public housing agencies.
- **Assistive Tech Optimization:** Program semantic HTML5 elements and explicit WAI-ARIA attributes to guarantee total screen reader compatibility.
- **Full Keyboard Operability:** Every interactive element—including maps, dropdown filters, popups, and calculators—must be entirely navigable without a mouse.
- **Strict Contrast & Font Scaling:** Design with mandatory high-contrast ratios and fluid text sizing to support visually impaired and elderly users.

6. CMS Architecture & Development

- **Enterprise CMS Platform:** Develop on a robust, user-friendly CMS (such as WordPress or Drupal) configured specifically for public sector security and stability.
- **No-Code Visual Editor:** Customize the backend admin panel so non-technical PHA staff can easily edit alerts, manage waitlist statuses, and publish documents.
- **Role-Based Workflow Management:** Establish user permissions and approval tiers (e.g., Contributor, Editor, Admin) to safeguard site modifications.
- **Security & Performance Tuning:** Implement advanced firewalls, automated malware scanning, SSL encryption, and aggressive page-caching to handle heavy traffic spikes during waitlist openings.

7. Data Migration, Testing & Launch

- **Document Migration:** Move and organize historical policy archives, board meeting minutes, and regulatory PDF forms into the new file framework.
- **Cross-Browser & Device QA:** Rigorously test the site on all major browsers (Chrome, Safari, Edge, Firefox) and operating systems (iOS, Android).
- **Accessibility Auditing:** Conduct both automated evaluation scans and manual validation checks using real screen readers (NVDA, JAWS, VoiceOver).
- **Smooth Deployment Strategy:** Coordinate domain redirection, server configurations, and database migrations to eliminate downtime during cutover.

8. Staff Training & Ongoing Hypercare

- **Custom CMS Training:** Provide live training sessions and tailored video modules for PHA staff on creating pages, uploading files, and editing the property map.
- **30-Day Hypercare Support:** Supply comprehensive technical support immediately post-launch to resolve bugs, fine-tune code, and optimize infrastructure stability.

ATTACHMENT B Cost Proposal Submission Form

Bidders must submit their pricing using this exact format. All prices must be fixed-fee and fully inclusive of all labor, materials, overhead, and licensing required to complete the Scope of Work.

1. Core Project Milestones (Fixed-Fee)

Milestone / Deliverable	Estimated Hours	Total Fixed Cost
Phase 1: Discovery, Strategy & IA • Stakeholder workshops, audience persona mapping, multilingual strategy, and final sitemap architecture.		\$
Phase 2: User Experience (UX) & UI Design • Wireframes, clickable interactive prototypes, and fully accessible visual style guide / page layouts.		\$
Phase 3: CMS Setup & Core Development • CMS installation, secure role-based workflow configuration, responsive frontend coding, and SEO implementation.		\$
Phase 4: Interactive Feature Engineering • Program Wizard, Predictive Smart Search, Open Waitlist Tracker, Geolocated Property Map, Rent/Utility Calculators, and Portal Gateways.		\$
Phase 5: ADA / WCAG 2.2 AA Auditing & Compliance • Automated scans, manual screen reader/keyboard testing, remediation, and final compliance certification.		\$
Phase 6: Data Migration & Launch • Content/document migration, cross-device QA testing, server deployment, and SSL setup.		\$
Phase 7: Training & Post-Launch Hypercare • Live staff CMS training, custom video documentation guides, and 30-day post-launch technical support.		\$
TOTAL CORE PROJECT COST		\$

2. Ongoing Maintenance, Licensing & Support (Recurring Cost)

Service Description	Billing Frequency	Recurring Cost
CMS Platform Updates & Security Patching • Regular core/plugin updates, automated malware scanning, and firewall management.	Monthly	\$
Dedicated Technical Support Block • Guaranteed monthly hours for minor design, text, or functional modifications (e.g., 5-10 hours/month).	Monthly	\$

Hosting Infrastructure (If provided by bidder)

- | | | |
|---|--------|----|
| • Secure, cloud-based hosting capable of handling high-traffic spikes during waitlist openings. | Annual | \$ |
|---|--------|----|

Third-Party Licensing Fees (If applicable)

- | | | |
|---|--------|----|
| • Itemize any proprietary plugins, modules, maps, or accessibility widget fees. | Annual | \$ |
|---|--------|----|

3. Hourly Labor Rates for Out-of-Scope Requests

These rates will apply to any future enhancements or out-of-scope work requested by the Housing Authority after the 30-day hypercare window.

Key Personnel / Professional Role Blended Hourly Rate

Project Manager / Account Lead	\$ / hr
Senior UX/UI Designer	\$ / hr
Senior Frontend/Backend Developer	\$ / hr
Accessibility Specialist / Auditor	\$ / hr
Content Strategist / Copywriter	\$ / hr