



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

WEBSITE REDESIGN, CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, HOSTING, AND SUPPORT SERVICES

BY

2:00 PM

ON WEDNESDAY, September 16, 2026

**City of West Des Moines
City Manager's Office
4200 Mills Civic Pkwy
West Des Moines, IA 50265**

PUBLIC NOTICE
WEBSITE REDESIGN, CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, HOSTING, AND SUPPORT SERVICES
CITY OF WEST DES MOINES
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

The City of West Des Moines, Iowa, is seeking qualified firms to provide website redesign, content management system implementation, hosting, content migration, training, and ongoing support services for the City's primary public-facing website.

The City is seeking a modern, accessible, mobile-first website platform that improves public access to City information and services, strengthens navigation and search functionality, supports efficient content management by City staff, and provides a scalable foundation for future digital service needs.

All proposals must be submitted electronically through the City's IonWave e-bidding system at: <https://wdm.ionwave.net>. Paper or emailed proposals will not be accepted.

Proposal Closing: 2 pm, CST, September 16, 2026.

Proposal Title: Website Redesign, Content Management System, Hosting, and Support Services

The City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, waive irregularities, and award in the best interest of the City.

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed at:

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Published in the Des Moines Register on August 21, 2026.

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WEBSITE REDESIGN, CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, HOSTING, AND SUPPORT SERVICES
CITY OF WEST DES MOINES
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

The City of West Des Moines, Iowa, invites qualified firms to submit electronic proposals for website redesign, content management system implementation, hosting, content migration, staff training, and ongoing support services for the City's primary public-facing website.

All proposals must be submitted electronically through the City's IonWave e-bidding system at <https://wdm.ionwave.net>. Paper or emailed submittals will not be accepted.

Proposal Closing: 2 pm, CST, September 16, 2026.

Proposal Title: Website Redesign, Content Management System, Hosting, and Support Services

PROPOSAL PROCEDURE

Firms must register on the city's IonWave e-bidding portal to submit proposals.

All proposal forms, pricing sheets, attachments, and required documents must be completed and uploaded in IonWave prior to the submission deadline. Late proposals cannot be accepted once the system closes. Firms are strongly encouraged to submit early to avoid technical or upload issues.

Submission through IonWave constitutes acknowledgment and authorization by the proposer to bind its company to the terms of this RFP. Unsigned or unauthorized proposals may be considered non-responsive.

The City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, waive technicalities or irregularities, request clarification or additional information, negotiate with one or more proposers, cancel this solicitation, and award as a whole or in part in the best interest of the City.

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PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The City of West Des Moines, Iowa, is seeking a qualified firm to redesign and modernize its primary public-facing website, currently available at www.wdm.iowa.gov.

The website is a key communication and service-delivery tool for residents, businesses, visitors, and City staff. It provides access to City departments, public meetings, news, events, forms, documents, services, and other public information.

The City seeks to improve the website's homepage, navigation, site structure, department landing pages, search, content organization, accessibility, keyword and metadata tools, and overall user experience. A responsive website is a priority, as approximately 63 percent of website visitors have accessed the site from mobile devices since January 2026.

The City's 2024 community survey found that 64 percent of respondents rated the overall quality of the City website positively. The City seeks to build on that foundation by making information and services easier to find and providing staff with a practical platform for maintaining content.

The base scope is limited to the primary City website. Proposers must also describe the platform's ability to support future City-affiliated sites, subsites, microsites, or department-specific web experiences with separate branding, permissions, governance, and operational independence.

Water Works is a separate legal entity and is not included in the base scope unless separately authorized by both entities.

PROJECT GOALS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

The City seeks a modern, accessible, secure, and responsive website platform that improves access to City information and services.

The selected firm shall demonstrate how its proposed solution will help the City:

1. Make high-demand information, services, forms, meetings, news, events, permits, payments, contacts, and public resources easier to find.
2. Organize content around common user needs and tasks, rather than relying only on the City's internal department structure.
3. Improve the homepage, navigation, department landing pages, search, page hierarchy, and service pathways so users can find information faster and complete tasks more easily.
4. Provide a responsive and accessible experience across mobile devices, tablets, laptops, and desktop computers, with support for WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards at launch.
5. Provide an intuitive content management system that allows authorized City staff to create, update, review, schedule, archive, and publish content without specialized technical skills.

6. Maintain a consistent City identity while allowing departments, programs, and future affiliated sites to preserve appropriate content, branding, permissions, and operational independence.
7. Provide secure hosting, reliable performance, backups, recovery capabilities, integrations, and long-term support.
8. Support long-term value through maintenance, updates, training, accessibility assistance, ongoing guidance, and periodic website refresh support approximately every 18 to 24 months without requiring a full website replacement.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The selected firm shall provide the labor, software, hosting, project management, training, support, and related services necessary to complete the project. The selected firm shall work with City Communications, Information Technology, and designated department representatives throughout the project.

Discovery, Planning, and Information Architecture

The selected firm shall conduct a discovery process to understand the City's current website, user needs, content, technical requirements, and project priorities.

At a minimum, the selected firm shall:

- Conduct a project kickoff and stakeholder engagement process.
- Review available website data and background materials, including Google Analytics/Looker Studio data, the 2024 community survey website results, current website content, user feedback, and existing integrations.
- Identify common public tasks, priority audiences, service pathways, and content needs.
- Develop a project plan with milestones, deliverables, City and vendor responsibilities, approval points, and communication procedures.
- Conduct a content audit and recommend content to migrate, consolidate, revise, archive, remove, or redirect.
- Develop a proposed sitemap, navigation structure, department landing-page framework, content-governance recommendations, and redirect plan.

Required deliverables include a project plan, content audit summary, proposed sitemap, navigation structure, content-governance recommendations, and redirect plan.

Website Design and User Experience

The selected firm shall design and configure a modern, accessible, responsive website that reflects the City's brand and makes services and information easier to find.

At a minimum, the selected firm shall:

- Develop design concepts, wireframes, and reusable page templates for the homepage, department landing pages, service pages, news, events, forms, and document libraries.
- Design the homepage around high-priority services, public notices, meetings, news, alerts, events, and frequently requested information.
- Provide intuitive navigation, clear service pathways, internal search access, breadcrumbs, and logical page hierarchy.
- Create flexible templates and content components that staff can maintain without routine vendor assistance.
- Ensure the design supports responsive layouts, readable content, accessible controls, fast-loading pages, and consistent City branding.
- Provide City review and approval opportunities for the visual direction, homepage, navigation, core templates, and final pre-launch design.

CMS, Integrations, Hosting, and Security

The selected firm shall provide a secure, browser-based content management system that allows authorized City staff to manage website content without specialized programming skills.

The proposed solution must support:

- Role-based permissions, publishing workflows, version history, scheduling, archiving, and content preview.
- Management of pages, news, alerts, events, forms, documents, images, videos, navigation, metadata, redirects, and search-related content.
- Reusable templates, content blocks, document and media libraries, and accessibility prompts or safeguards where available.
- Internal search, analytics, reporting, APIs, data export, and integration with third-party systems.
- Secure website hosting, SSL/TLS encryption, backups, disaster recovery, security updates, administrative access controls, and incident-response procedures.
- City ownership and exportability of City-created and City-provided content, data, documents, metadata, and configurations.

The City requires website hosting services only. DNS and domain name hosting are managed through the State of Iowa and are not included in the requested hosting services. Proposers shall identify any coordination needed with the City or the State of Iowa for launch, redirects, SSL/TLS certificates, DNS records, or related implementation tasks.

Proposers shall describe the proposed CMS, hosting environment, system limitations, user or storage limits, required add-ons, support model, update process, integrations, and any functions requiring vendor assistance or additional fees.

Content Migration, Training, and Launch

The selected firm shall provide a documented migration, training, testing, and launch process.

At a minimum, the selected firm shall:

- Develop a migration plan identifying content to be migrated, revised, archived, removed, or redirected.
- Identify City and vendor responsibilities for webpages, documents, forms, media, metadata, navigation, and other content.
- Migrate approved content while preserving or improving formatting, accessibility, links, redirects, search functionality, and user experience.
- Provide administrator and editor training, written documentation, and access to ongoing training resources.
- Establish a staging environment and complete functional, accessibility, mobile, performance, integration, and user-acceptance testing before launch.
- Provide a launch plan, rollback procedures, launch-day contacts, and post-launch support.

Before launch, the selected firm shall provide a launch-readiness summary identifying completed work, outstanding issues, redirect status, testing results, hosting readiness, and any City actions required before launch.

The selected firm shall provide at least ninety (90) days of post-launch support.

Ongoing Support and Maintenance

The selected firm shall describe its ongoing support, maintenance, account-management, and enhancement services, including:

- Support hours, contact methods, escalation procedures, and response targets.
- Included maintenance, updates, security patches, and platform enhancements.
- Accessibility, analytics, and strategic support options.
- Costs for support beyond the initial post-launch period.
- Training and onboarding resources for future City staff.
- Optional services or future enhancements not included in the base proposal.

OPTIONAL OR FUTURE WEBSITE EXPANSION

The base scope of this RFP is limited to the City of West Des Moines primary website.

The City may consider future expansion of the selected platform for additional City-affiliated websites, subsites, microsites, department-specific pages, or other public-facing digital properties. Potential future sites may include RecPlex, West Des Moines Public Library, Go West, and other City programs or facilities.

Proposers shall describe the platform's ability to support future sites with separate branding, domains, permissions, content ownership, navigation, and operational control. Proposers shall also identify any related setup, design, migration, licensing, hosting, training, support, or integration costs.

Water Works is a separate legal entity and is not included in the base scope. Any future participation by Water Works would require separate authorization, scope, and financial agreement.

TECHNICAL, ACCESSIBILITY, AND PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

The proposed platform must provide a secure, accessible, reliable, and high-performing public-facing website. Proposers shall identify any requirement they cannot meet, including the proposed alternative, limitation, cost, and implementation impact.

Accessibility

The website and CMS must support WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards at launch and ongoing accessibility maintenance by City staff. The solution must support standard accessibility practices, including keyboard navigation, screen readers, accessible forms and documents, alternative text, headings, captions, and color contrast.

Proposers shall provide a current Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) or Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) for the proposed platform. The VPAT/ACR must identify the platform's level of conformance with applicable accessibility standards and any known limitations, exceptions, or remediation plans.

Proposers shall describe their accessibility testing, remediation, monitoring, staff training, and ongoing support approach.

Compatibility and Performance

The website must be responsive and function effectively on current versions of major browsers, including Chrome, Edge, Firefox, Safari, Mobile Safari, and Chrome for Android.

The platform must support fast-loading pages, optimized media, scalable infrastructure, reliable uptime, performance monitoring, planned maintenance, and support response targets.

Search, Analytics, and Discoverability

The platform must support internal search across webpages, documents, news, events, and other public content. It must also support search filtering, keywords, metadata, page titles, descriptions, tags, redirects, indexing controls, XML sitemaps, broken-link monitoring, and search-engine optimization.

The proposed solution must support the City's continued use of Google Analytics/Looker Studio or other approved analytics tools. The City shall retain access to analytics and reporting data generated through City-owned or City-authorized accounts during the agreement term.

Security, Privacy, and Data Portability

The platform must provide secure administrative access, role-based permissions, SSL/TLS encryption, administrative activity logging, routine security updates, vulnerability management, backups, recovery capabilities, and incident-response procedures.

The proposed platform should support single sign-on for City employees who manage website content, preferably through Microsoft Entra ID. The City's goal is to use multi-factor authentication for administrative users where available. Proposers shall describe available single sign-on, multi-factor authentication, role-based access, and administrative security options, including any limitations, configuration requirements, or additional costs.

Proposers shall disclose any privacy, cookies, analytics, third-party tracking, or user-data practices associated with the proposed solution.

The City must be able to export City-owned content, documents, media, metadata, redirects, forms, and related data in usable formats. Proposers shall identify available export formats, processes, limitations, timing, and any fees for data export or transition assistance.

VENDOR QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The City seeks a firm with demonstrated experience designing, implementing, hosting, and supporting public-sector websites.

Proposers shall provide:

- A brief firm profile, including legal name, business address, website, primary contact, year established, core services, number of employees, and primary office location.
- A summary of relevant public-sector website experience, including municipal website projects.
- At least three comparable public-sector website projects completed within the last five years. For each project, include the client name, project completion date, scope of services, platform used, current website address, and client reference contact information.

- Identification of the proposed project team, including the project manager and key staff responsible for design, CMS implementation, migration, integrations, accessibility, training, hosting, security, and post-launch support.
- Identification of any subcontractors, hosting providers, platform providers, or other third parties expected to participate in the project, including their role, access to City data or systems, and any related costs.
- Disclosure of any pending or prior litigation, contract termination, debarment, suspension, bankruptcy, or other matter that may materially affect the proposer's ability to perform the work.
- A description of the platform's long-term support model, account-management approach, update process, and planned enhancements relevant to municipal websites.

The selected firm shall remain responsible for all work performed by subcontractors and third parties.

PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted through the City's IonWave e-bidding system by the deadline stated in this RFP. Proposals should follow the order below and use the same section titles where practical.

Proposals shall include:

1. **Cover Letter**

Include the proposer's legal name, business address, primary contact information, and confirmation that the signer is authorized to bind the proposer.

2. **Executive Summary**

Provide a concise summary of the proposed solution, including the proposed platform, understanding of the City's needs, key strengths, implementation approach, and long-term support model.

3. **Project Approach and Implementation Plan**

Describe the proposed approach for discovery, design, CMS implementation, integrations, content migration, testing, training, launch, and post-launch support. Include a proposed schedule, major milestones, City responsibilities, assumptions, dependencies, and key risks.

4. **Proposed Technical Solution**

Describe the proposed CMS, hosting environment, security controls, accessibility tools, search and metadata capabilities, analytics, integrations, data-export capabilities, platform limitations, optional modules, and additional fees.

5. Relevant Experience and Project Team

Provide the qualifications and experience required in this RFP, including comparable projects, references, key personnel, subcontractors, and long-term support model.

6. Pricing Proposal

Provide a complete and itemized pricing proposal in accordance with the pricing requirements.

7. Exceptions and Additional Information

Identify all exceptions, qualifications, assumptions, or deviations from the RFP or proposed contract terms. Failure to identify an exception may be interpreted as agreement to comply with the applicable requirement.

PRICING PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposers shall submit a complete, itemized pricing proposal for all services, software, hosting, support, and other costs necessary to provide the proposed solution.

Pricing shall separately identify:

- One-time implementation costs, including discovery, design, CMS configuration, migration, integrations, testing, training, launch, and post-launch support.
- Annual or recurring costs, including licensing, hosting, maintenance, support, accessibility tools, analytics, search, storage, and other required platform fees.
- Any available cost savings, discounts, bundled pricing, or reduced fees based on the City's existing or future use of related products, services, modules, subscriptions, or platforms.
- Third-party, subcontractor, or pass-through costs.
- Optional modules, services, integrations, training, migration support, custom development, future enhancements, or future City-affiliated sites.
- Usage-based, storage-based, user-based, transaction-based, or other variable costs.
- Any anticipated rate increases, renewal adjustments, or escalation provisions during the first five years of the agreement.
- Any fees associated with data export, transition assistance, termination, or platform conversion.

Proposers shall provide a five-year total cost of ownership summary and clearly identify all assumptions, exclusions, limitations, City responsibilities, and conditions that may affect pricing.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

The City will evaluate proposals using a review committee that may include representatives from Communications, Information Technology, Procurement, and other City departments.

The City intends to select the proposal that provides the best overall value based on qualifications, proposed solution, implementation approach, long-term support, and cost. The City is not required to award the lowest-priced proposer.

Evaluation Criteria	Points
Understanding of City needs and project requirements	15
Project approach, work plan, schedule, and project management	15
Website design, user experience, navigation, service delivery, and mobile-first approach	15
CMS functionality, staff usability, content governance, search, SEO, and long-term sustainability	15
Technical capabilities, hosting, security, integrations, accessibility, and data ownership	15
Content audit, migration, testing, launch, and post-launch support	10
Public-sector experience, references, and proposed project team	10
Pricing and five-year total cost of ownership	5
Total Available Points	100

The City may review proposals for responsiveness, request clarifications, conduct interviews or demonstrations, check references, request best-and-final offers, negotiate with one or more proposers, reject all proposals, or revise or cancel the RFP.

Selection of an apparent successful proposer does not create a contract. Any agreement is subject to final negotiation, required City approval, and execution by authorized representatives of both parties.

INTERVIEWS, DEMONSTRATIONS, AND NEGOTIATIONS

The City may invite one or more proposers to participate in interviews, product demonstrations, reference discussions, best-and-final offers, or negotiations.

If requested, proposers should be prepared to demonstrate the proposed platform's CMS functionality, page templates, navigation, search, workflows, permissions, accessibility tools, mobile responsiveness, analytics, integrations, data export, and support processes.

The City may negotiate scope, schedule, pricing, service levels, support, contract terms, security, accessibility, insurance, data ownership, and other proposal elements. Participation in interviews, demonstrations, or negotiations does not guarantee contract award.

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

The selected firm will be required to meet the City's insurance requirements before contract execution. The City's standard insurance requirements will be included as an attachment with this RFP on IonWave.

The City reserves the right to modify insurance requirements based on the final scope of work, hosting arrangement, access to City systems, handling of City data, and other risk considerations.

CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The City intends to negotiate and execute a written agreement with the selected firm. The final agreement will incorporate the RFP, the selected proposal, negotiated scope, pricing, and any additional terms required by the City.

No agreement is binding until it is fully negotiated, approved as required by the City, and executed by authorized representatives of both parties.

The final agreement may address, at a minimum:

- Contract term, renewal options, and termination rights.
- Scope of services, project schedule, deliverables, acceptance criteria, and payment terms.
- Written approval requirements for changes to scope, pricing, staffing, technology, integrations, or subcontractors.
- City ownership, access, and export of City-created or City-provided content, data, documents, media, metadata, configurations, and related materials.
- Confidentiality, Iowa Open Records Law compliance, and cooperation with public-records requests.
- Security safeguards and prompt notification of actual or suspected incidents involving City data or systems.
- Accessibility obligations and correction of contractor-caused accessibility defects.
- Insurance, indemnification, compliance with applicable law, and governing law and venue in Polk County, Iowa.
- Contractor responsibility for subcontractors and transition assistance upon expiration or termination.

The City may terminate the agreement for cause or convenience as provided in the final agreement.

RFP SCHEDULE

The City intends to follow the schedule below. The City may modify the schedule as needed and will provide notice of any material changes through IonWave.

Milestone	Date
RFP Issued	August 17, 2026
Deadline for Written Questions	August 31, 2026
City Responses to Questions	September 7, 2026
Proposal Closing	September 16, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. CST
Initial Review of Proposals	September 21–25, 2026
Interviews and Product Demonstrations, if requested	September 28–October 2, 2026
Reference Checks and Final Evaluation	October 5–9, 2026
Notice of Intent to Award	October 12, 2026
Contract Negotiation and Finalization	October 13–23, 2026
Required City Approval, if applicable	November 2, 2026
Contract Execution	November 6, 2026
Anticipated Project Kickoff	November 16, 2026
Anticipated Website Launch	May 2027

The City may award based on written proposals alone or may invite one or more proposers to participate in interviews, demonstrations, negotiations, or best-and-final offer discussions.

Proposers should identify any scheduling constraints, resource limitations, implementation lead times, or assumptions that may affect their ability to meet the anticipated project schedule.

CITY RIGHTS AND RESERVATIONS

The City reserves the right to take any action it determines to be in its best interest, including the right to reject any or all proposals, waive minor irregularities, request clarifications or additional information, conduct interviews or demonstrations, check references, negotiate with one or more proposers, revise or cancel the RFP, and award all, part, or none of the requested services.

The City may reject any proposal that is late, incomplete, non-responsive, conditional, or otherwise not in the City's best interest.

Any award is subject to available funding, required City approval, successful negotiation, and execution of a final written agreement.

Materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of the City and may be subject to disclosure under Iowa Code Chapter 22.

The City will not reimburse proposers for any costs related to preparing, submitting, presenting, demonstrating, negotiating, or otherwise participating in this procurement process.