

Request for Qualifications

# Appalachian Council of Governments Website Design & Development



Appalachian Council of Governments  
30 Century Circle (PO Box 6668, 29606)  
Greenville, SC 29607

## INTRODUCTION

The Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) is seeking to enter into a professional services agreement with a qualified vendor to design, develop, and implement a new website for the organization. The intent of this RFQ is to solicit statements of qualifications from interested, experienced firms to replace the current website, [www.scacog.org](http://www.scacog.org), with a well-designed, intuitive website that simplifies content management and improves the end-user experience.

ACOG seeks to collaborate with a firm who can implement all of the functionality identified in this document in a timely manner and within budgetary constraints. It is the intention of ACOG to select a single vendor to provide all of the identified design, development, and implementation services specified. ACOG will rely upon the expertise of the selected vendor to design how the new website will best fit the needs of the organization and its end-users.

## PROJECT INFORMATION

The Appalachian Council of Governments is a voluntary organization of local governments in the northwest corner of South Carolina, serving a region which includes the counties of Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg, as well as the 42 municipalities therein.

Since its formation in 1965, ACOG has served the dual mission of tackling issues of regional significance and providing services to local governments. Economic and community development, transportation, infrastructure development, resource management, aging services, and workforce development are all issues of regional importance in which ACOG takes an active role. At the local level, the agency's services include general administration, technical assistance, training, planning, grant writing & administration, and information & mapping services.

The current ACOG website is outdated, difficult for staff to manage and update, and hard for users to navigate. In addition, the design and layout are not visually appealing. ACOG is excited to work collaboratively with a firm who can design, develop, and implement a website that provides relevant information in a clear and easy to navigate format.

It is expected that much of the content from the existing website will need to be migrated to the new website. ACOG staff will assist with this process as much as possible, however the selected firm should guide the process and determine the manner in which the content is organized and presented. Current pages may be consolidated and new pages may be added where appropriate.

## CORE FUNCTIONALITY AND FEATURES

The information below represents the core functional capabilities identified by ACOG for the new website. Should the selected vendor identify other functionality that will help enhance the experience of the end-user or improve content management, those recommendations will certainly be welcomed.

1. **ADA Compliant** – Site is compliant with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
2. **Approval Rights** – System administrator can establish specific user roles and permissions for staff.
3. **Archive Center/Document Library** – Agendas, minutes, newsletters, plans, and other documents can be stored in a searchable format.

4. **Calendars** – Can be updated/published by department.
5. **Departmental Pages** – Each department has its own set of pages that can be managed by designated staff.
6. **Directories** – End-users can search lists for ACOG staff or board members, elected officials, and local government contacts.
7. **End-User Interaction** – End-users can subscribe to email lists.
8. **Frequently Asked Questions** – End-users can read and search FAQs.
9. **Intranet Site** – Employees can access a restricted site for news, forms, etc.
10. **News and Announcements** – A section of the homepage is dedicated to regional/organizational news and announcements.
11. **Online Forms** – End-users can complete forms, surveys, and questionnaires that are housed/hosted on the website.
12. **Online Job Postings and Application** – Job applicants can review posted positions and submit an application with attachments.
13. **Page Templates** – Content managers can easily update, delete, and create template-based web pages.
14. **Printable Pages** – End-users can easily print web pages.
15. **Quick Links** – Shortcut navigation options are available throughout the site for easy access to the most important information.
16. **Responsive Design** – Site adjusts to the end-user's viewing screen size.
17. **RFP/RFQ/Bid Posting** – Bids, awards, and results can be easily posted and accessed on the site.
18. **Rotating Photos/Videos/Banners** – Dynamic image display available on the home page and other main pages as needed.
19. **RSS Feed** – End-users can subscribe to an RSS feed (or feeds) for sections of the site containing important news/updates.
20. **Site Search** – Internal site search engine and search box enhance end-users' ability to locate information.
21. **Site Statistics** – Google Analytics tracking code is installed on all pages so internal users can view data and perform site audit reports.
22. **Sitemap & Breadcrumbs** – An XML sitemap, an HTML sitemap, and breadcrumbs are implemented to improve search engines' ability to crawl and index the site.
23. **Social Media Interface** – End-users can see Twitter feed and connect with our social media accounts directly from the homepage.
24. **SSL Certificate** – Website has a valid SSL certificate.
25. **Video Center** – Videos can be live-streamed or embedded.

## SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Qualified firms are invited to submit qualification packages on or before Friday, October 27, 2017 at 12:00pm. There is no requirement for the format of the qualification package except that it includes, at a minimum, the following:

- **Letter of Transmittal**
  - ◊ Authorized signature
  - ◊ Brief summary of project approach
- **Firm Profile/Qualifications**
  - ◊ Name and contact information
  - ◊ Firm overview (years in business, number of employees, etc.)
  - ◊ Project team
  - ◊ Experience with and examples of public sector projects
- **Project Development Approach**
  - ◊ Brief description of website development process
  - ◊ Proposed timeline
- **References**
  - ◊ Contact information for three clients

One copy of the qualification package should be submitted via email to Brooke Ferguson.

Email address: bferguson@scacog.org

Subject line: ACOG Website RFQ

Submittals that are not received on or before the specified deadline will not be accepted. ACOG reserves the right to request follow-up information or clarification from firms under consideration, reject any or all submittals, compare the relative merits of the submittals, and choose the vendor which will best serve the interests of the organization.

Each response to this RFQ shall be done at the sole expense of the proposing firm and with the express understanding that no claims against ACOG for reimbursement will be accepted.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Responses to this RFQ will help ACOG identify the most qualified firm. The table below illustrates the evaluation criteria weighting:

Qualifications	40%
Approach/methodology	40%
Project samples and references	20%

## SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process will involve the following phases:

**Phase One:** The review team will evaluate all submittals. The initial review will determine conformance to submission requirements and whether responses meet minimum criteria established.

**Phase Two:** The review team will interview most qualified applicants.

**Phase Three:** The review team will check references for all firms under consideration.

**Phase Four:** The Appalachian Council of Governments will enter into negotiations leading to a professional services agreement.

## SCHEDULE

The approximate RFQ schedule is summarized below:

Issuance of RFQ:	October 9, 2017
Firm Submittals Due:	October 27, 2017
Firm Interviews, Follow-up:	November 1-15 2017
Firm Selection:	On or before November 17, 2017

*Note: Dates subject to change*

## INQUIRIES

All inquiries regarding this RFQ may be directed to:

Brooke Ferguson, Economic Development Director  
Appalachian Council of Governments  
30 Century Circle (PO Box 6668, 29606)  
Greenville, SC 29607  
Phone: 864.241.4649  
Email: bferguson@scacog.org