



## REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS (RFSQ) No. 24-026

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**DATE:** March 25, 2024

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**Project Title:** Website Accessibility Audit and Update

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The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) invites qualified and experienced firms to submit Statements of Qualifications to conduct a website accessibility audit.

### **A. Intent**

This Request for Statements of Qualifications (RFSQ) is issued to determine the most qualified and experienced service provider that can meet the RDN's requirements, expectations, and timeline.

The RDN will review submissions received in response to this RFSQ and enter discussions with the top-ranked respondent to negotiate the terms, scope, timeline, and cost based on the actual scope of work required (the Work). Should these negotiations fail to result in a contract for the Work, the RDN may then elect to negotiate with the next highest ranked service provider and so on until an agreement is reached or the process is cancelled.

In any event, the RDN shall not be bound to enter a contract with any respondent to this RFSQ and, at its sole discretion, may elect to collapse this process.

### **B. Background**

The RDN is a regional government located in central Vancouver Island that has a large geographic footprint and includes four municipalities (City of Nanaimo, District of Lantzville, City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach) as well as seven electoral areas. It is home to over 170,000 residents (based on the 2021 census).

The RDN is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of 19 elected officials. Of those, seven represent the rural electoral areas and are elected specifically for the RDN Board. The remaining 12 are elected officials from the four member municipalities. They are appointed to the RDN Board by their council member peers to represent the interests of their respective municipality.

The RDN delivers a wide range of services including transit, recreation, parks, drinking water, wastewater, solid waste management, bylaw, permits, planning, emergency services, fire services and more. Services received depend on where a resident lives within the RDN.

The RDN website (rdn.bc.ca) is significant, with hundreds of pages, documents, and links. It is a primary communications tool for the RDN to inform residents about services, programs, events, legislative information and more. The last full refresh of this site occurred approximately eight years ago. The website was moved to an open-source platform (Drupal) from a proprietary platform in 2019 and Pantheon is the hosting provider. The site has functioned well to provide residents with the information they need about RDN programs and services.

An in-depth audit is needed to:

- update the website so that information can be found quickly and easily,
- ensure we are meeting the website user needs of residents and the organization, including from an accessibility perspective,
- and address inconsistencies in format across departmental pages that has occurred due to both a decentralized structure for updating content and capacity limitations.

## **C. Contemplated Scope of Work and Timeline**

### **Scope of Work**

An in-depth accessibility audit would include:

- Design (text, colours, fonts etc.)
- Content (use of plain language, alt text for images etc.)
- Layout Development (navigation, mobile friendliness etc.)

**Note:** The audit would be based on bringing the RDN website up to the WCAG AA 2.2 standard

And pending final scoping of the project:

- Implementation of the recommendations
- Accessibility training resources
- Website accessibility design guidelines

An overall refresh of the website should include considerations such as:

- The user experience
- Graphic/website design best practices
- Consistency across departmental landing pages

The RDN also welcomes ideas to help keep a consistent look and feel across the website (budget dependent). e.g. real-time, editing tool pop-ups to ensure the right tools are used while editing to align with a website style guide.

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## **Additional Work**

In 2024 and/or following years, based on satisfactory performance, available budget and necessary approvals, additional website work may include:

- Expanded website design guide (that encompasses more than just accessibility guidelines)
- The creation of an online style guide that encompasses all the communications and engagement guides in an easy-to-use format accessible through one link vs multiple, standalone documents.
- An annual website accessibility audit to ensure the RDN maintains accessibility standards or meets new requirements if needed.

## **Timeline**

The scope of work should begin as soon as possible after a successful proponent is confirmed and be complete by mid to late 2024. The training can occur within a few months of work completion. Timing of additional work would be determined later if it is approved.

## **D. Statement of Qualifications and Evaluation**

The statement of qualifications should be no longer than five (5) single sided pages in length (not including cover page, cover letter and appendices). Please include the following for evaluation purposes:

1. Qualifications and areas expertise of the Firm and nominated Project Manager. Please include CV/Resume of the Project Manager and explain how this individual will provide value for the RDN. Describe your Firm's approach to the work. This should include:
    - experience conducting website audits using WCAG standards.
    - experience with Drupal and websites hosted by Pantheon.
    - experience ensuring alignment with web security best practices (OWASP, etc).
  2. Experience of Firm and nominated Project Manager in previous relevant work. Provide short descriptions of similar projects and assignments completed by both the Firm and nominated Project Manager.
  3. Demonstrated understanding and experience conducting website audits using the WCAG AA 2.2 standard (this can be included in items 1 and 2 above as applicable).
  4. An overview of how your firm and nominated Project Manager keeps current on online accessibility standards and best practices.
  5. A statement of your firm's ability to complete the work within the timeframe described.
  6. A statement of your firm's approach to advancing equity and sustainability in corporate operations and service provisions, including any certifications in this regard.
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The Regional District of Nanaimo will evaluate the Statements of Qualifications (the “SOQ”) on a consensus basis and assign a score out of 100 based on the above evaluation criteria. Any or all SOQs will not necessarily be accepted.

**E. Submission Date & Time**

Statements of Qualifications should be received on or before 3:00 p.m. local time on the 15th day of April 2024. The RDN, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to accept late submissions.

**F. Questions and Submissions**

Questions and submissions should be directed to:

Rebecca Taylor  
Communications Coordinator  
250-390-6502  
rtaylor@rdn.bc.ca

**G. Additional Information**

If the RDN determines that additional information is required, the RDN will post an Addendum on the RDN ([www.rdn.bc.ca/current-bid-opportunities](http://www.rdn.bc.ca/current-bid-opportunities)) and the new BC Bid ([www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca/)) websites. It is the sole responsibility of interested vendors to check for additional information prior to submitting their response.

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