



South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership Request for Proposals: New Website Development

The Request

We are in the process of hiring a web developer with the talent, expertise and experience required to create a new website for the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership. This website will serve the economic development, social, academic, and cultural interests of the South Bend – Elkhart region.

These audiences include, but are not limited to citizens, college students, institutions, companies, and government entities within the region, as well as site selectors, companies, prospective residents, institutions, and investors from across the country and around the world.

About the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership

The South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership focuses on accelerating regional competitiveness and inclusive economic growth through job creation, execution of strategic initiatives, and capital investment through collaboration. The Regional Partnership works to strengthen our region's global sectors, prioritize talent, and tell our story.

- Vision: To be the most prosperous region in the Midwest
- Goals: Increase Population, Knowledge, and Companies

About the South Bend – Elkhart Region

The South Bend – Elkhart region is on the cusp of population growth and in the midst of exciting new economic and quality of place investments that promise to transform our way of life for generations to come.

This is a knowledge-driven, highly connected region that serves and provides access to a global innovation economy. The central Midwest location and proximity to Chicago, Detroit, and Indianapolis provides efficient access to major cities, markets, and customers.

As the proud home to the University of Notre Dame, we are also blessed with more than a dozen other colleges and universities educating 40,000 students that, along with our private sector, help to create a region of connected innovation hubs.

Residents have access to amenities such as the beaches of Lake Michigan, bike and walking trails, a burgeoning culinary scene, minor league professional baseball, theaters, museums, and a zoo.



The rich cultural and sports environment is enhanced by collegiate level sporting events, art, culture, and community activities provided by our region's higher education institutions.

Cities such as South Bend, Mishawaka, Plymouth, Niles, Benton Harbor, Goshen, and Elkhart feature urban attractions along riverfronts, with water amenities, parks, and restaurants. Other cities feature lakes and the bedroom communities and cultures that are nurtured around them.

The region's key strengths include: many existing place-based assets, a competitive cost structure, access to markets, higher education resources, and cultural diversity. Innovation Districts are already emerging throughout the region, and leaders are exploring additional place-based development opportunities throughout our 47 cities and towns.

The Challenge

Our organization has many facets, with various programs, events, and initiatives growing from each of the five focus pillars. Our website contains a lot of information – some would say too much. It has become unwieldy. We are concerned people are getting lost in the weeds, and not finding the key information they need. We'd like to give it a visual refresh, as well as make it more user friendly.

We need to audit the site to see what pages are no longer needed. It needs an updated look and refreshed copy.

Our team may also need training on any additional components.

Current South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership Website

- southbendelkhart.org
- Platform: WordPress
- Launched: 2017

Current Platforms on South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership Website

We will continue using these platforms on new website, needs to be compatible:

- Wordpress
- Salesforce
- Jotform
- Eventbrite
- Plugin: GIS
- Plugin: Event/News



Project Scope and Deliverables

- Review website analytics and audit existing site
- Build updated website map.
- Work with Regional Partnership team to refresh/create content
- Develop a site execution plan
- Execute site execution plan
- Train Regional Partnership team, if needed

Preferred Candidates

Candidates with the following credentials are preferred:

- Experience in building regional, state, or national websites
- Experience in the economic development sphere
- All team members are employees of the branding company (no consultants or freelancers)
- Female and minority firms strongly encouraged

The selected firm should exhibit the following characteristics:

- Proven track record of elevating an organization's messaging and reach through websites
- Innovative and organized approach to developing key messaging
- Timely responsiveness

Selection Criteria

Selection will be based upon a combination of the following criteria:

- Company portfolio/relevant work samples
- Experience
- Cost
- Time & Schedule

Who you will work with

The selected firm will work directly with representatives from the South Bend – Elkhart Regional Partnership.

Project Budget

- Project may not exceed \$40,000 budget.
 - Please provide a cost estimate and breakdown upon submission
 - Please share any nonprofit discount opportunities

Proposal Development

Proposals should be laid out in the following order:



- Company information
 - Name of Company
 - Company description
- Introduction (1 short paragraph)
- A brief executive summary that includes the following:
 - Tell us why your firm is the best fit for this project
 - Tell us how you are different from your competitors
 - Tell us who in your company will be doing the work
- Description of your project approach, style, and process
 - Biographies of key staff including summaries of their experience
 - Description of company experience
- A list of projects similar in scale that your company has completed
- Where possible, highlight work done for organizations similar to South Bend - Elkhart Regional Partnership
- Appropriate work samples
- Proposed schedule and timeline for benchmarks related to this project
- Cost
 - Estimated cost for all work
 - List of anticipated expenses
- Contact information
 - Address
 - Website
 - Phone
 - Name, title, and e-mail address for principal contact

Proposal Length

Proposals should be no longer than 12 pages.

Questions

Questions should be directed to the contact person at the bottom of this page. Questions will be accepted until March 19, 2024.

Proposal Delivery

Proposals should be delivered as PDF files to the email address below. The PDF files can include embedded links to relevant digital material if needed.

Schedule

- March 15, 2024 - RFP Distributed



- March 22, 2024 - Submit written questions to Sarah Niespodziany
- April 5, 2024 at 5:00pm - Deadline for proposals, submitted via email
- April 19, 2024 - Finalists chosen
- April 30, 2024 - Chosen agency selected and contacted.
- May 6, 2024 - Project kickoff
- September 30, 2024 - Project complete, website launch.

Submit to/Contact

Sarah Niespodziany
Vice President, Marketing and Strategic Communications
sniespodziany@southbendelkhart.org
574-323-3813