

# **TOWN OF ARLINGTON, VERMONT: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Website Development and Hosting Services

**ISSUING ENTITY:** Town of Arlington

**DATE OF ISSUING:** June 16, 2026

**PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** July 31, 2026, by 12:00 PM (Noon) EST

---

## **1. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

The Town of Arlington, Vermont invites qualified vendors to submit proposals for professional website development and hosting services.

The Town currently maintains a website that is outdated, difficult to manage, and limited in its ability to provide digital services to the public beyond static informational pages. The Town seeks a qualified contractor to design, develop, launch, and maintain a modern municipal website that serves as the primary digital gateway for residents, businesses, and visitors to access Town information and services.

This RFP seeks proposals for an initial one (1) year contract with two (2) optional one-year extensions, subject to mutual agreement between the Town of Arlington and the selected Vendor, contingent upon satisfactory performance and available appropriations.

## **2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The Town's primary objectives for this project are to:

- Provide complete, accurate, and timely Town information to the public on a modern, user-friendly platform.
- Enable Town staff and authorized volunteers to easily manage and update website content without technical expertise.
- Deliver new digital services that improve the efficiency of Town operations and reduce staff burden.
- Ensure full compliance with all applicable federal and Vermont state accessibility, transparency, and open government laws as of the date of launch and on an ongoing basis.
- Provide a secure, reliable, and well-supported platform that protects the Town's data and the privacy of its residents.

### 3. SCOPE OF WORK

#### 3.1 Required Website Features

The selected Vendor shall develop and deliver a website that includes, at minimum, the following features, and public-facing pages:

Government Transparency & Open Meeting Law Compliance (1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314; Act 133, 2024; Act 51, 2025):

- Public pages for each board, committee, and commission with meeting agendas posted in advance of each meeting, including sufficient detail on specific business to be discussed, in compliance with Vermont's Open Meeting Law.
- Public pages for meeting minutes for each board and committee, posted in compliance with Vermont's Open Meeting Law.
- Public pages hosting electronic recordings of decision-making (non-advisory) body meetings, posted concurrently with the posting of minutes, consistent with Act 51 (2025) requirements.
- A dedicated page posting the Town's procedures for filing an Open Meeting Law complaint and the full text of 1 V.S.A. § 314, as required by Vermont's Open Meeting Law.
- Public page with official election information, including voter registration resources and results.

Town Departments, Boards & Officials:

- Public pages with information about every Town department, board, commission, and committee.
- Public page with contact information for all Town officials and employees.
- Public page with all annual Town Reports.
- Public pages about Town policies and ordinances.
- Public page with the current Town Plan.

Zoning & Permitting:

- Public pages with zoning information, regulations, and the official zoning map.
- Public page with the town tax map.
- Online application form for zoning permits.
- Online application forms for Town Clerk services (records requests, vital records, etc.).

Resident Services & Engagement:

- Secure payment portal for Town taxes and fees.
- Town calendar with the ability for credentialed users to add and manage events.
- A newsroom or announcements feature for Town news and public notices.

- Site-wide search functionality supporting indexing of all CMS content and linked Town documents.
- Social media integration and links to Town social media channels.

### 3.2 Technical & Platform Requirements

- The website must be fully compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.1, Level AA standards, as required by the U.S. Department of Justice's final rule under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), published April 2024. Arlington's compliance deadline is April 26, 2027; however, the Town expects the delivered website to meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA at launch. The Vendor is also strongly encouraged to implement WCAG 2.2 Level AA as a best practice for future-proofing. The Vendor shall be contractually responsible for ensuring that all content, features, and third-party integrations delivered under this contract comply with these standards.
- The Content Management System (CMS) used shall not be a proprietary, beta, limited-release, or early-adopter platform. It must be a stable, widely supported platform with an established support community.
- The website must be fully responsive and optimized for mobile devices, tablets, and desktops across a range of connection speeds and device capabilities.
- The platform must support text-only viewing and printing of content.
- The website must support high-speed page load times consistent with modern performance standards (e.g., Google Core Web Vitals benchmarks).
- The Vendor shall provide a written security plan addressing the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the website and all associated data, including provisions for cybersecurity incident response.
- The website must integrate easily with related Town and community websites and external resources as directed by the Town.
- The Vendor shall migrate all content from the Town's existing website with no loss of information or documents and shall ensure no broken links.
- The website must support role-based user permissions, allowing the Town administrator to grant specific editing rights to individual staff members and volunteers on specific pages, sections, or functions.
- All website code, content, data, and domain ownership shall remain the sole property of the Town of Arlington upon project completion and at contract termination.

### 3.3 Hosting Requirements

- The Vendor shall provide reliable, secure hosting for the website for the duration of the contract.
- Hosting must include SSL/TLS encryption (HTTPS) at all times.
- The Vendor shall disclose the hosting location(s) and data center provider(s).

- Uptime must be guaranteed at a minimum of 99.9% per month, excluding scheduled maintenance windows communicated in advance.
- The Vendor shall provide regular backups of all website content and data, with a documented recovery process.

### 3.4 Training & Ongoing Support

- The Vendor shall provide comprehensive training for a minimum of three (3) Town staff or volunteer administrators in the use of the website platform, CMS, and all administrative functions.
- Training materials and documentation shall be provided in written form and retained for future staff onboarding.
- The Vendor shall provide ongoing technical support and a defined support level agreement (SLA) specifying hours of availability, days per week, and guaranteed response times.
- The Vendor shall provide a clear, documented process for the Town to request new features, enhancements, and bug fixes, along with typical response and completion timeframes.
- The Vendor shall describe which website features (e.g., forms, payment portal settings, user management, calendar, email integration) the Town can modify independently.

## 4. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

All proposals and the resulting contract must address the following regulatory requirements:

### Federal Accessibility (ADA Title II):

The website must comply with WCAG 2.1 Level AA as mandated by the U.S. Department of Justice final rule (April 2024) under Title II of the ADA. The Town of Arlington, as a municipality with a population under 50,000, has a compliance deadline of April 26, 2027. The Vendor shall warrant WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliance at launch and shall remediate any accessibility deficiencies identified during the contract period. Proposals should describe the Vendor's accessibility audit and testing process.

### Vermont Open Meeting Law (1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314; Act 133, 2024; Act 51, 2025):

The website platform must support the Town's obligations under Vermont's Open Meeting Law as amended through Act 51 (2025), including: posting of agendas with sufficient specificity; posting of minutes; posting of electronic recordings of decision-making body meetings concurrently with minutes; and posting of OML complaint procedures and the text of 1 V.S.A. § 314.

Vermont Public Records Act (1 V.S.A. §§ 315-320):

The website must support the Town's obligations under the Vermont Public Records Act, including providing public access to Town records and facilitating public records requests.

Cybersecurity:

The Vendor shall provide a written security plan. The Town requires that any cybersecurity vulnerabilities or incidents affecting the website be reported to the Town within 24 hours of discovery.

## 5. RFP TIMELINE

<b>RFP Issued</b>	June 16, 2026
<b>Questions / Clarifications Deadline</b>	July 17, 2026, by 5:00 PM EST
<b>Addendum Issued (if needed)</b>	July 11, 2026
<b>Proposals Due</b>	July 31, 2026, by 12:00 PM (Noon) EST
<b>Select Board Review of Proposals</b>	Week of August 17, 2026
<b>Vendor Interviews (if applicable)</b>	Week of August 17, 2026
<b>Notice to Proceed</b>	To be determined following contract execution

The Town reserves the right to modify this timeline. All changes will be communicated to registered proposers via written addendum.

**PROPOSALS RECEIVED AFTER THE SPECIFIED DATE AND TIME WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

## 6. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted via email to [katie.dixon@arlingtonvermont.org](mailto:katie.dixon@arlingtonvermont.org) with the subject line: "RFP: Website Development and Hosting Services." A hard copy may also be submitted to Town of Arlington, 3828 VT Route 7A, Arlington, VT 05250. Proposals must include the following:

## 6.1 Firm / Vendor Information

- Legal name, address, telephone number, and primary contact information for the firm or individual.
- Identification of key personnel who will lead and manage this project, including their qualifications and relevant experience.
- A brief description of the firm's organizational structure and years in business.

## 6.2 Qualifications & Experience

- Description of at least three (3) similar website development projects completed for Vermont or New England municipalities or governmental organizations within the last five (5) years. Include the name of the municipality, scope of work, technologies used, and current website URL.
- Three (3) professional references from municipal or government clients for whom similar work was performed, including name, title, organization, phone number, and email address.
- Links to at least three (3) municipal or government websites recently completed or currently maintained by the firm.

## 6.3 Technical Approach

- A description of the CMS platform(s) the Vendor proposes to use, including rationale for the selection.
- A description of the Vendor's approach to ADA/WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliance, including the specific testing tools and methodology used.
- A description of the Vendor's approach to content migration from the existing Town website.
- A description of the hosting infrastructure, including the hosting provider, data center location(s), backup procedures, and uptime guarantee.
- A written cybersecurity and data protection plan.
- A description of the Vendor's approach to mobile responsiveness and site performance optimization.

## 6.4 Project Plan & Timeline

- A proposed project timeline from Notice to Proceed through website launch, including key milestones and estimated durations.
- A description of the Vendor's project management approach and how the Vendor will collaborate with Town staff throughout the project.
- Key questions or information the Vendor would need from the Town to complete the project successfully.

## 6.5 Support & Service Level Agreement

- A description of the ongoing support model, including hours of availability, days per week, guaranteed response times for critical issues, non-critical issues, and enhancement requests.
- A description of the process for the Town to request new features, enhancements, or corrections, including typical completion timeframes.
- A description of all website features and functions that Town staff will be able to manage independently (e.g., form creation, payment portal settings, user management, calendar, email integration, document uploads).

## 6.6 Pricing & Fee Structure

- A detailed, itemized cost proposal for all project phases, including discovery and planning; design; development; content migration; testing and quality assurance; training; and launch.
- Annual hosting fees.
- Monthly or annual ongoing support/maintenance fees, if applicable.
- Hourly or other rate(s) for enhancement requests, additional features, or additional support beyond the base contract.
- Any applicable software license fees or third-party platform costs.
- All pricing shall remain in effect for a minimum of thirty (30) days after the proposal submission deadline.

## 7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Town of Arlington will award this contract on a "best value" basis, considering both price and the ability to deliver services. Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Evaluation Criterion	Weight
Qualifications, Experience & References	25%
Technical Approach & Platform Quality	25%
ADA/WCAG Accessibility Compliance Plan	15%
Project Timeline & Implementation Plan	10%
Support Level & Ongoing Services	15%
Cost / Fee Structure	10%

The Town reserves the right to conduct interviews with shortlisted firms prior to making a final selection. The Town may request best and final offers from finalists.

## 8. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- The Town of Arlington reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive informalities or irregularities in any proposal, and to cancel this RFP in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of the Town to do so.
- The Town is not responsible for any costs incurred by proposers in preparing or submitting proposals.
- All proposals submitted become the property of the Town of Arlington and are subject to Vermont's Public Records Act (1 V.S.A. §§ 315-320). Proposers who consider any portion of their submission to be confidential or proprietary must clearly mark such portions and state the basis for the claimed exemption.
- Proposals shall not be construed as a binding offer. The Town is under no obligation to award a contract as a result of this RFP.
- The selected Vendor will be required to execute a formal contract with the Town of Arlington. The contract will incorporate the requirements of this RFP, the selected Vendor's proposal, and any negotiations between the parties.
- The selected Vendor shall maintain, at a minimum, the following insurance throughout the contract term: Commercial General Liability (\$1,000,000 per occurrence / \$2,000,000 aggregate); Professional Liability/Errors & Omissions (\$1,000,000 per occurrence); Workers' Compensation as required by Vermont law. The Town of Arlington shall be named as an additional insured on all applicable policies.
- All website content, code, domain names, login credentials, databases, and data shall be and remain the property of the Town of Arlington. Upon contract termination, the Vendor shall transfer all such assets to the Town within thirty (30) days.
- The contract shall include accessibility warranty language. The Vendor warrants that all deliverables will conform to WCAG 2.1 Level AA and shall remediate any non-conformance identified within a mutually agreed timeframe. The contract shall include clear assignment of responsibility for accessibility failures related to third-party components.

## 9. QUESTIONS AND ADDENDA

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing via email to Town Administrator, [katie.dixon@arlingtonvermont.org](mailto:katie.dixon@arlingtonvermont.org) with the subject line: "RFP Question – Website Development" by July 17, 2026, at 5:00 PM EST. Questions submitted after this date may not be answered. Responses to all questions received will be issued as a written

addendum and distributed to all registered proposers. Oral representations or answers shall not be binding.

## 10. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must be received no later than July 31, 2026, at 12:00 PM (Noon) EST. Late proposals will not be accepted under any circumstances.

### **Email Submission (Preferred):**

Send to: [katie.dixon@arlingtonvermont.org](mailto:katie.dixon@arlingtonvermont.org)

Subject line: "RFP: Website Development and Hosting Services"

### **Mail / Hand Delivery:**

Town of Arlington – Attention Town Administrator

3828 VT Route 7A

Arlington, VT 05250

Envelope must be clearly marked: "RFP: Website Development and Hosting Services"

## **CONTRACTOR SIGNATURE**

**Company Name:**

**Authorized Representative:**

**Title:**

**Business Address:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Federal Tax ID:**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

By signing above, the bidder certifies compliance with all RFP requirements.