

CLARK COUNTY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

218

COUNTY WEB SITE DESIGN
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

ISSUING AGENCY: Clark County Office of Purchasing
ISSUED ON BEHALF OF: Office of Budget and Information Services

RELEASED: January 21, 2000

CLOSES: February 25, 2000

PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED NO LATER

THAN 5:00 P.M. TO:

Clark County
Office of Purchasing
P.O. Box 5000
1013 Franklin Street
Vancouver, Washington 98660
(360) 397-2323

Request for Proposals

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS # 218

CLARK COUNTY WEB SITE DESIGN

1.0 Introduction, Background, and General Information

Clark County is located about 70 miles east of the Pacific on the Southern border of Washington State. The County has an area just over 656 square miles. The County's population is just over 325,000 which includes Vancouver, the County's largest city, with a population over 125,000. Clark County's population ranks fifth largest among Washington's 39 Counties. The County is located just across the Columbia River from Portland, Oregon.

Clark County Government is divided into roughly 24 Departments and operates with a budget just under 300 million dollars a year. Clark County's 1400 employees, have their 1200 PCs linked together on an Ethernet "10baseT" network, utilizing TCP/IP protocol. We are in the midst of establishing a 100 megabit fiber backbone with 10 megabit wiring to most drops. Remote sites are linked through fiber optics, ISDN connections, or T1 phone lines.

1.1 Purpose

Clark County has an existing Web site. It began several years ago as a simple bulletin board. Since then, it has grown immensely and while it is very useful to us, we have a number of desires that were never anticipated during these growth spurts. Consequently, we are not well poised to move forward, expanding to the newer functions we want to perform. While we have a number of requirements for our new site there is no preconceived notion as to what kind of Web site the County will favor.

Our site currently contains pages of information for each of our County Departments. Several Departments have chosen to expand their presence on the site. Our most aggressive users include the Sheriff's Office, Human Resources, Treasurer, Auditor, and Emergency Services. In addition, the site contains all County ordinances and codes, current issues, election results, and news releases. The sites September activity log registered 121,560 requests (30,499 visits) with a large percentage (about 35 to 40 percent) of visitors looking at our online job listings or the sex offenders information pages. Our current site can be viewed at (<http://www.co.clark.wa.us/index.htm>).

At this point in time, we are looking for qualified vendors that are interested and capable of preparing a Functional Design Specification or "blueprint", if you will, for development of a Clark County Web site. **In addition to providing a blueprint, the vendor must also be able to demonstrate "proof of concept" through a small working model.**

1.2 **Program Description and Objectives**

The Clark County Commissioners have always valued communications between county government and its constituents. County employees provide a wide variety of services from more than 35 divisions scattered throughout 25 facilities around the county. With the current Internet access levels in homes and businesses increasing and with the growing acceptance of e-commerce, a Web site seems to be an ideal central repository of countywide Information and services.

In Oct of 1996, Clark County launched their official County Government Web site. Each County department was represented by one or more informational pages describing that department's services. Several departments, most notably the Sheriffs office, Emergency services and Public Works had already developed sites of their own on public ISP servers. These sites were moved to the county server and linked with the countywide information. In many instances, Departments have used their own staff, or hired vendors, to create additional pages for our site. No agreement has been reached on a common countywide look and feel for our site. So departments that maintain their own sites have separate themes and separate navigational schemes.

The current Web site is on a "stand-alone" server positioned outside our county firewall. We recognized this is not a secure place to store financial transactions. We do snapshot backups of the site and have the ability to rebuild the site from a server inside the firewall; however, there is no archival process, and nothing is in place to track e-commerce transactions.

Below are some of the Improvements we expect from a new Web site:

- The new site must be oriented to, and cater to, the needs of our customers. Providing user oriented menus and navigational aids, will make it much easier, and more intuitive, for clients to find the information they are searching for.
- The new site must have a similar look and feel throughout, with a singular theme and consistent navigational aids.
- The new site must provide a secure environment for E-commerce, with transaction tracking capabilities. Secure E-commerce will give us the ability to transact County business on-line. This will save clients the "wear and tear" of traveling to County offices and lessen the workload on employees behind the counter.

- The new site must use technology that will allow us to interface with our legacy systems that reside on Image, SQL, and Oracle databases
- The new site must be truly interactive with interfaces built in to allow residents to voice their opinions on current events and e-mail elected officials.

1.3 **Duration of Contract**

The duration for any contract awarded as a result of this RFP will be negotiated at the time a contract is agreed upon. However, we certainly would expect completion sometime in the first half of 2000.

1.4 **Type of Contract**

The contract for this proposal will be a fixed price contract.

1.5 **Property Procurement and Management**

All non-expendable property procured with funds under this RFP is subject to terms and conditions of the funding authority.

1.6 **Prospective Contractor's Administration**

Any organization operating a program funded by Clark County shall have demonstrated administrative and accounting capabilities necessary to safeguard all public funds.

2.0 **General Requirements**

2.1 **Independent Price Determination**

The prospective contractor guarantees that, in connection with this proposal, the prices and/or cost data have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement for the purpose of restricting competition. This does not preclude or impede the formation of a consortium of companies and/or agencies for purposes of engaging in jointly sponsored programs.

2.2 **Authorship**

Applicants must identify any assistance provided by agencies or individuals outside the "proposer's" own organization in preparing the proposal. No contingent fees

for such assistance will be allowed to be paid under any contract resulting from this RFP. All proposals submitted become the property of Clark County. It is understood and agreed that the prospective contractor claims no proprietary rights to the ideas and written materials contained in or attached to the proposal submitted.

2.3 **Price Warrant**

The proposal shall warrant that the costs quoted for services in response to the RFP are not in excess of those which would be charged any other individual or entity for the same services performed by the prospective contractor.

2.4 **Conflict of Interest**

All proposals submitted must contain a statement disclosing or denying any interest, financial or otherwise, that any employee or official of Clark County or the appropriate Advisory Board may have in the proposing agency or proposed project.

2.5 **Subcontracting**

No activities or services included as a part of this proposal may be subcontracted to another organization, firm, or individual without the approval of Clark County. Such intent to subcontract should be clearly identified in the proposal. It is understood that the contractor is held responsible for the satisfactory accomplishment of the service or activities included in a subcontract.

2.6 **Consortium of Agencies**

Any consortium of companies or agencies submitting a proposal must certify that each company or agency of the consortium can meet the requirements set forth in the RFP.

2.7 **Equal Opportunity**

It is the policy of Clark County to require equal opportunity in employment and services subject to eligibility standards that may be required for a specific program.

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, national origin, age, citizenship, marital status, political affiliation or belief, be denied employment or benefits, or be discriminated against as a consumer, administrator or staff person under any program or activity receiving funds under this RFP.

In compliance with Department of Labor Regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, no qualified handicapped individual shall be discriminated against in admission or access to any program or activity.

The prospective contractor must agree to provide equal opportunity in the administration of the contract, and its subcontracts or other agreements.

2.8 **Award of Contract**

The contract award will not be final until Clark County and the prospective contractor have executed a contractual agreement. The contractual agreement consists of the following parts: (a) the basic provisions and general terms and conditions, (b) the special terms and conditions, (c) the project description and goals (Statement of Work), and (d) the budget and payment terms. Clark County is not responsible for any costs incurred prior to the effective date of the contract. Clark County reserves the right to make an award without further negotiation of the proposal submitted. Therefore, the proposal should be submitted in final form from a budgetary, technical, and programmatic standpoint.

2.9 **Debarment and Suspension**

The contractor must certify that they are not debarred or suspended or otherwise excluded from or are ineligible for participation in Federal Assistance programs under Executive Order 12549, "Debarment and Suspension". The contractor must also certify that it will not contract with a subcontractor that is debarred or suspended.

2.10 **Limitation**

This RFP does not commit Clark County to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP, or to procure or contract for services or supplies. Clark County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this RFP, to negotiate with all qualified sources, to waive formalities, to postpone award, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP if it is in the best interest of Clark County to do so.

2.11 **Cancellation of Award**

Clark County reserves the right to immediately cancel an award if the contractual agreement has not been entered into by both parties or if new state regulations or policy make it necessary to change the program purpose or content, discontinue such programs, or impose funding reductions. In those cases where negotiation of contract activities are necessary, Clark County reserves the right to limit the period of negotiation to sixty (60) days after which time funds may be unencumbered.

3.0 **Administrative Requirements**

Contractors shall comply with all management and administrative requirements established by Washington Administrative Code (WAC) and the Revised Code of the State of Washington (RCW) and any subsequent amendments or modifications, as applicable to providers licensed in the State of Washington.

3.1 **Single Audit Requirements**

Any contract awarded as a result of this RFP may include the agreement to annually audit any contracts with Clark County. Audits shall be performed in accordance with OMB Circular A-128 or A-133 as appropriate and shall be received by Clark County within the 12 month period following the close of each fiscal year. All audit costs shall be the contractor's responsibility. Agencies not covered by federal single audit requirements may be responsible for an independent agency audit which meets general accepted auditing standards.

3.2 **Other Audit/Monitoring Requirements**

In addition, auditing or monitoring for the following purposes will be conducted at the discretion of Clark County:

- a. Fund accountability;
- b. Contract compliance; and
- c. Program performance.

3.3 **Insurance**

Prior to the signing of a contract, the contractor(s) selected must show evidence of a certificate of commercial liability for a minimum of \$1,000,000 identifying Clark County as an additional insured.

4.0 Proposal Development

4.1 Proposal Format

Directions for developing a proposal are included in Attachment A. Acceptance of proposals is based, among other criteria, on detailed adherence to the directions outlined in Attachment A. Clark County reserves the right to reject proposals not in compliance with this requirement.

4.2 Proposal Content

At the time of submission, the proposal must provide a full description of all services following the outline presented in Attachment A. The proposal must enable readers to understand how the agency intends to use these public funds and what measurable outcomes are expected to be achieved. (See instructions in Attachment A for more information.)

“Proposer’s” are reminded that proposals will be considered exactly as submitted. Points of clarification will be solicited from “proposer’s” at the discretion of Clark County. Those proposals determined to not be in compliance with provisions of this RFP and the applicable law and regulations will not be processed.

The information and proposed budget for the agency selected for contract award will form the basis for negotiation of a contract. Clark County reserves the right to issue a contract without further negotiation using the data contained in the RFP. Failure of a prospective contractor to accept this method of contract development will result in cancellation of the award.

5.0 Proposal Submission

5.1 Schedule

The original proposal package (with the appropriate number of copies) must be delivered to the following location no later than 5:00 p.m. on February 25, 2000:

Clark County Purchasing Department
1013 Franklin Street - 3rd floor
Vancouver, Washington 98660

Original documents and appropriate copies must be delivered to the Clark County Purchasing Department in sealed package (s). Include RFP# and Name/Organization visibly located on outside of package.

Proposals received with insufficient copies cannot be properly disseminated to the Review Committee and other reviewers for necessary action and therefore may not be processed.

COPIES REQUIRED: 7

5.2 **Late Proposals**

A proposal received after the date and time indicated above will not be accepted. No exceptions will be made.

5.3 **Verbal Proposals**

Verbal proposals will not be considered in making the award of any contract as a result of this RFP.

5.4 **Oral Presentations**

An oral presentation may be required of those prospective contractors whose proposals are under consideration. Prospective contractors may be informed that an oral presentation is desired and will be notified of the date and time that the oral presentation is to be conducted.

5.5 **Rejection of Proposals**

Clark County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received and to negotiate with any or all prospective contractors on modifications to proposals.

6.0 **Proposal Evaluation and Selection**

6.1 **Evaluation and Selection Process**

Proposals received in response to this RFP will be evaluated by a Review Committee. The Committee's review results and recommendations may be presented to an appropriate advisory board prior to the consent process with the Clark County Board of Commissioners.

6.2 **Evaluation and Selection Criteria**

- a. Each proposal received in response to the RFP will be objectively evaluated and rated according to a specified point system.
- b. Each proposal received in response to the RFP will be objectively evaluated and rated based on proposed project quality and attention to our needs; a mixture of business qualifications, references, and site design experience with

organizations of our size and complexity; and overall cost effectiveness. A one hundred (100) point system will be used, weighted against the following criteria:

Does the proposal comply with the requirements contained within the RFP? A "No" response may disqualify the proposal from further consideration.

_____Yes _____No

- a. proposed project quality and attention to our needs 0-50
- b. a mixture of business qualifications, references, and site design experience with organizations of our size and complexity 0-30
- c. overall cost effectiveness 0-20

TOTAL 0-100

6.3 **Disputes**

Clark County encourages the use of informal resolution to address complaints or disputes arising over any actions in implementing the provisions of this RFP. Written complaints should be addressed to Clark County - General Services, P.O. Box 5000, Vancouver, Washington 98668-5000.

Attachment A

Directions for Developing a Proposal

These instructions were developed to aid in proposal development. They also provide for a structured format so reviewers can systematically evaluate several proposals. These directions apply to all proposals submitted.

An original and each copy of the proposal package must include all of the sections in the order indicated, attachments should be clearly referenced and identified to facilitate the review process.

Part I: The "Proposal Summary" form is designed to serve as the cover sheet. Do not attach cover letters, title pages, or blank sheets ahead of this form, nor substitute letterhead paper for it. If additional space is needed plain paper may be attached behind this form. Special bindings are not required for submittal of your proposal. This form must be signed by a person authorized to make proposals and enter into contract negotiations on behalf of your agency.

Part II: The "Project Description" should be developed in response to the general description of our problem and the **15** specific requirements we have listed. Please label this section of your proposal as "Part II: Project Description". The information presented will provide a basis for contract negotiation and may be contained within the contract document.

The information presented should be an overview of what is being proposed. It should include the methodological approach your firm will use. It should also include a simple breakdown, or budget summary, of your firm's line item budget for this proposal. In particular, we are interested in the amount of time your firm will spend "on-site" working with our Web site committee and gathering and analyzing departmental input. We will supply considerable assistance in establishing and working with the departments.

Appended to the overview should be comments on the 15 specific requirements specified on pages 18-21 of this document. These comments should include a statement that your proposal does comply with the issue, doesn't comply, or doesn't need to comply because you handle the issue in another way. The latter claim should include a detailed explanation.

Part III: The "Statement of Contractor Qualifications" provides needed information on your agency's experience and ability to receive and execute a contract award with Clark County.

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Part II: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

What we are trying to do

We are soliciting a vendor that has the desire, experience, and talent to develop a superior plan, or “blueprint”, for our future Web site. We have an active Web site operational today. It’s purpose is the dissemination of information. It has grown, over time, through the consolidation of a number of distinctive sites developed by different departments within the County. We are looking for a vendor that can pull it all together and develop a comprehensive Web site plan that will give us a consistent “look and feel” and position us to proceed with a number of purposes other than simply providing information.

We are looking for a vendor that is willing to come on site and work with our Web staff and our departmental users, a vendor that will make use of the customer survey information we have collected and the professional audit we have completed concerning our current Web site.

Most importantly, we want a site designed from the customer’s perspective. We want the operation of this system to be what the majority of our customers would design themselves. We are looking for a plan that gives us a consistent “look and feel” to the site. In fact, we would like the choice of several “themes”, or “metaphors”, that would provide the feel of a common thread to the system. We are looking for a plan that provides a simple and intuitive way to navigate between screens. A design that is easy to keep current and maintain. A blueprint that recommends the technologies to use in developing the system and recommends the size and qualifications of staff needed for maintaining it. We need a design that facilitates “E-commerce” and customer communication with the County. We need a plan that provides for collecting information from our customers and allows customers access to selected data stored in County databases. We need a plan that leads to a secure system that can handle secure transactions.

Below are some of the Improvements we expect from a new Web site:

- The new site must be oriented to, and cater to, the needs of our customers. The new site will provide user oriented menus and navigational aids that will make it much easier and more intuitive for clients to find the information they are searching for.

- The new site must have a similar look and feel throughout, with a singular theme and consistent navigational aids. With as many Departments as the County has, there is a great diversity in services and information provided. We have Departments that have very little use for the Internet, and we have Departments with huge requirements. We have requirements that are static and seldom change, and we have information and services that change frequently. We need a Web site with the flexibility to handle the diversity and yet a consistency and common look and feel that identifies the County.
 - The new site must provide a secure environment for E-commerce, with transaction tracking capabilities. Secure E-commerce will give us the ability to transact County business on-line. This will save clients the “wear and tear” of traveling to County offices and lessen the workload on employees behind the counter.
 - The new site must use technology that will allow us to interface with our legacy systems that reside on Image, SQL, and Oracle databases
 - The new site must be truly interactive with interfaces built in to allow residents to voice their opinions on current events and e-mail elected officials.
- **1.** We want a site that is **designed from the users’ perspective**, not from the perspective of the County’s employees or the organization’s internal structure.

By **“user’s perspective”** we are aiming to improve customer service and reduce the user’s need to make trips to the Courthouse, phone the various departments, or engage in “snail mail” to conduct their business. (For example, the site would allow the user to report potholes, pay property taxes, locate property on a map, pay for their dog’s license, and contact the commissioners on issues they feel strongly about. We want it to be easy for the first time user to renew a dog license, without having to know that dog licenses are issued by Animal Control in the Community Development Department.)

- **2.** The “blueprint” must “lay out” and demonstrate the **“user friendliness and usability”** of the site.

Here we are referring to the design and organization of the site. (For example, features that make the site easy and friendly to use; easy to navigate; quick to download; and easy to search and find specific information. In addition, the site should provide the user with helpful and useful links to additional resources.

We want the site designed with a **search engine** included, that enhances navigation to the user's desired information by utilizing key words. Our goal is to use the site as one of our primary tools to disseminate information and conduct business.

- **3.** The “blueprint” must provide and demonstrate the basic **visual design** of the site.

By **visual design**, we are referring to the following: overall look-and-feel of entire site; integration of Clark County Identity; use of graphics and typography; and layout consistency. The site must be friendly, attractive, engaging, and compelling. (We would like at least three alternatives to choose from with respect to a “visual theme or continuity” tying the pages together.)

- **4.** The “blueprint” must provide and demonstrate the basic **interactivity** of the site.

By **interactivity**, we are referring to the following: a variety of opportunities for users to interact with the site; multi-levels for depth of engagement with the site; and many opportunities to reach out beyond the site. (For example, the ability for the user to: find information they are looking for; give information to the County; contact officials; conduct business with the County; pay fees, fines, and taxes; fill out County forms; file Court documents; link to other government sites and useful destinations (possibly links to other destinations within the County site); and access databases and maps that are a matter of public record.)

- **5.** The “blueprint” must recommend and demonstrate a practical, secure, and cost effective method for conducting **electronic business** at the site.

By **electronic business**, we are referring to possibilities such as: payment of fines and fees, payment of taxes, purchase of permits, filing of legal documents, acquiring or renewing dog licenses, etc.

- **6.** We expect the vendor to work on-site and closely with us throughout this project. We want advice and direction on the **content** of the site. The vendor should discuss and suggest, as well as outline and demonstrate a number of ideas and philosophies concerning **content** development.

By **content**, we are referring to the following: text information presented on site; supporting graphics; depth of information; completeness of information; and freshness of information.”

- 7. The “blueprint” must provide and demonstrate methods for simple basic **maintenance** of the site. This would include (a) maintenance of the site’s content, and (b) server and technical maintenance.

(a) By “content” **maintenance**, we are referring to simple and straight forward methods for: updating, adding, or replacing content; adding, subtracting, or altering graphics; updating or adding links; and building new pages. We want simple procedures to keep our site fresh and current.

We want the vendor to recommend suggested staffing levels to maintain and operate our site after implementation. We want reports that let us know when information was placed on the site, who put it there, when it was last checked and refreshed, and at what frequency it should be updated or removed.

(b) By “server or technical” **maintenance**, we are referring to methods that would make it reasonably easy for our Webmaster to: maintain and expand our site; add new information and pages, and develop new business transactions. (For example, we need to know how to build and add a new survey, create a new business transaction, maintain our visual content, maintain and manage our server, etc.)

This would include staffing recommendations for on-going “server and technical” development and maintenance.

- 8. The “blueprint” must provide a site equipped with all reasonable **security features**.
 - By this we mean, features that would reasonably be expected of a government site conducting the type of business described elsewhere in this document. Examples might include, but not be limited to, recommendations for a server / firewall architecture that will provide a secure environment for e-commerce and read only access to legacy data. In addition, the vendor should recommend authentication and encryption methods that will allow for the electronic filling of documents and secure site maintenance.

- 9. The vendor needs to **recommend technologies and languages** for site development.

Where possible we want a selection of languages and technologies that are non-proprietary and **mainstream** and will likely remain so for some time.

- 10. We want the “blueprint” to layout a plan for a **text only parallel site** that users are automatically diverted into based on their browser’s capabilities. In addition, users may elect this option as a measure to speed site navigation

regardless of the Browser used. We also need to be attuned to the Web site requirements established by the American Disabilities Act.

Part of the final design or “blueprint” would include projected costs for development, operation, and maintenance of this option.

- **11.** We want a site that would allow us in the future to provide our users with **streaming audio and video**.
- **12.** We want a site that will allow us to include **“live cam” technology** showing points of interest in the County. This could be for weather, scenery, traffic, construction, etc.
- **13.** We want **recommendations for bandwidth** to assure a responsive site for the user load and the transactions we expect.

We need recommendations for our bandwidth to connect to the World Wide Web. It should be sufficient for appropriate response time for our projected activity level, number of simultaneous connections, and general operation of the site. The recommendations should be in the form of megabytes per second. We currently operate with 1.544 megabytes per second on a T1 line. The recommendation should suffice for some redundancy in the system.

- **14.** The design or “blueprint” must allow us to **develop the site in stages** to fit our funding capabilities.
- **15.** The “blueprint” should provide cost and labor estimates for developing, implementing, and maintaining the site as designed.

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Part III: STATEMENT OF CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Please include on a separate page(s) labeled “Part III: Statement of Contractor Qualifications”, the answers to the following questions.

1. What is the size of your parent company? This could be answered in number of “Full time employees”, volume of annual business, or company’s net worth.

2. If this proposal were successful, what is the size of the division that would provide the Clark County web site design? This could be answered in number of “Full time employees” or volume of annual division business.

3. How long have you been in the business of providing web site designs or web site development to “end users”?

4. How many web sites have you designed and/or developed over the past five years?

4(a). Please list several customers that we may use as a reference.

5. How many local or State governments are in operation using a web site designed, or developed, by your business?

5(a). Please list several government customers that we may use as a reference.

6. What is the Web site experience of the person, or persons, that would be working with Clark County on this design?