



Request for Information

From

Web Site Design and Development Agencies

Release date: February 17, 2017

Submission deadline: March 17, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| About WEC | 1 |
| About this RFI | 3 |
| Purpose | 3 |
| Further Information | 3 |
| Questions about this RFI | 3 |
| Timeline | 4 |
| Terms of Reference | 4 |
| Expectations | 5 |
| Scope of Work | 6 |
| Project Background | 6 |
| Requirements | 8 |
| Terms and Conditions | 11 |
| Submission Requirements | 11 |
| Submission Guidelines | 11 |
| Questionnaire | 12 |
| Evaluation Methodology | 13 |
| Submission | 13 |

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

The Women's Economic Council (WEC) seeks information from proven, innovative, professional Canadian web site design and development agencies with demonstrated capabilities to build and design an online connection and resourcing platform. We are seeking to identify professional agencies that, like WEC, value partnership and listening and can interpret and actualize our vision into compelling and emotive calls to action that will engage diverse women across Canada to want to connect with other women and women-serving agencies in order to improve their economic lives and general well-being.

About WEC

Economic security for every woman. That's our vision. That's our goal. When we use the term "economic security," we're talking about the safety and security of people. Economic security means having full access to the opportunities and resources that society should provide to everyone. It's about empowerment and stability. When a woman has a stable income and is able to support a good standard of living into the future, she is economically secure and better able to provide for her family. We want to live in a world where all women are empowered and free to pursue life according to their plans and dreams. It's what we work towards every day at WEC. Our projects are all focused on our goal of economic security for every woman. And, since we began in 2002, we have made major strides towards achieving it. Still, there is much left to do.

WEC is a registered charity, registration #: 842279549 RR0001

WEC's Mission

"To advance women's community economic development to improve the lives of women, their families and communities."

Though we focus on economic security, our ultimate goal is broader. We want better lives for women in Canada, and we know that women-centred community economic development is one of the best means to bring about that reality. We help women achieve their goals by giving women the tools and resources they need and by working in closer partnership with their communities. How do we work to increase the level of economic security among women? It is not enough to address the issue from only one angle. Instead, we adapt our strategies to the realities of the lives of Canadian women and their communities.

INTRODUCTION (continued)

WEC's Holistic Approach

It's important to remember that economic security is related to many things other than money. We would be providing a temporary fix if we helped enact change to only one aspect of the problem. To improve women's economic security we also need to consider:

- Social support
- Community resources
- Education
- Healthcare
- And so much more

For this reason, WEC focuses on developing women-centred CED (Community Economic Development), which takes into account the many shifting factors of the Canadian economy in a broader context. We work with organizations that take similar approaches, helping to strengthen entire communities on a holistic level.

WEC's Strategies

WEC's strategic plan has three main elements:

- Strengthening the women's CED sector: We facilitate the sharing of resources and tools among organizations and women and liaise with mainstream CED organizations to promote a more women-focused approach.
- Sustaining WEC: We continue to strengthen our internal governance, building capacity, strengthening partnerships and securing funding opportunities aimed at sustainable resourcing for women's economic security.
- Supporting systemic change: We document the economic issues impacting women's lives, we engage the public on these issues, and we develop partnerships to enact change.

For further information visit the WEC website at: <http://www.womenseconomiccouncil.ca/>

ABOUT THIS RFI

Purpose

The purpose of this RFI is to identify a short list of qualified web design and development agencies for finalist consideration and solicitation of competitive quotations. Selected agencies will receive a comprehensive Request for Proposals (RFP) describing our project in greater detail and giving selected bidders an opportunity to expand on ideas and describe their proposed contribution more fully.

This current request for general Information (RFI) consists of the following sections:

- Terms of Reference
- Terms and Conditions
- Submission Requirements

Please read this document in its entirety and respond to all requirements.

Further Information

To ensure you are apprised of any supplementary information that may be provided, please confirm your intention to respond with a submission via e-mail to:

Janet Kranz, Co-Manager | Women's Economic Council Collective

Email: janetk@womenseconomiccouncil.ca

www.womenseconomiccouncil.ca

Questions about This RFI

To preserve the integrity of the procurement process, no telephone inquiries or verbal questions or meetings will be entertained. Written questions may be submitted via email only by the stated deadline for submission of questions (see Timeline on next page). Answers to questions received by this deadline will be published (without attribution) in a consolidated response that will be made available to all proponents.

ABOUT THIS RFI (continued)

Timeline

The table below illustrates the critical path and key dates for the RFI process.

Note: the deadline for RFI response and submission is Friday March 17, 2017.

| Milestones | Dates |
|--|----------------|
| RFI released | 2017-02-17 |
| Deadline for submission of questions (see above) | 2017-02-25 |
| Responses to questions published by WEC | 2017-02-27 |
| RFI response submission deadline | 2017-03-17 |
| Shortlist interviews | TBA |
| Request for Proposals (RFP)/Quotations | Mid April 2017 |

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The purpose of this RFI is to identify a short list of qualified web design and development agencies for finalist consideration and solicitation of competitive quotations through a subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

WEC is seeking information from interested web site design and development agencies in anticipation of finalizing procurement for a web design and development agency.

This will position WEC and the successful web agency to commence budgeted work on May 17, 2017. Once procurement is finalized, WEC will enter into an ongoing agreement with the selected web design and development agency of record, subject to annual/periodic negotiation of terms of reference, specifications, deliverables and fees.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (continued)

Expectations

WEC understands its audiences, its experiences and products and has a clear vision about what we need to achieve. We are seeking an agency that, like WEC, values women's issues, partnership and listening and can interpret and actualize our vision into compelling and emotive calls to action that will engage women and that can support collaboration and communication with each other and with women-focused agencies across Canada.

We seek and expect:

- Synergy: a strategic working relationship built on respect and mutual understanding
- Creativity: our message needs to stand out in a competitive marketplace but it must do so in a way that resonates equally with a variety of stakeholders i.e. women exploring, starting or in business; social enterprise or cooperatives; service providers providing resources; advocates and funders; for profit organizations offering services to women's enterprises e.g. banks or insurance companies, etc.
- Knowledge: demonstrated knowledge of web best practices and seamless integration (responsive design) of web, mobile and social media with other communication requirements
- Expertise: a high level of technical acumen in development, maintenance and support of web assets constructed with user-friendly, WYSIWIG tools that do not require in-house programming or HTML knowledge
- Proactivity: initiative, attention to detail and timely follow through based on realistic and agreed deadlines
- Professionalism: commitment to collaboration, communication and project management that allows WEC to delegate with confidence
- Accountability: results-based execution against agreed goals and measurable targets
- Commitment: WEC is a registered charity. We rely on in-kind support from partners, suppliers, vendors and other stakeholders to help us deliver free or low cost services to low-income and vulnerable women. Commitment to community and to the goals and objectives of the non-profit sector are important to WEC and to the success of this project.

Our assessment of proponent agencies with respect to these attributes and capabilities will be an important consideration in the awarding of this business.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (continued)

Scope of Work

WEC seeks the services of an experienced web developer and web designer who will work in close collaboration with WEC and its partners to ensure that its JIGSAW PUZZLE PROJECT web platform is properly designed, implemented and supported.

WEC requires a robust, dynamic and scalable web site that reflects high creative and user-focused production values consistent with best-of-breed connection, with emphasis on imagery, refreshment of content and social media. WEC operates without in-house IT resources. Beyond web and social media support, WEC also requires solutions for site hosting and technical support, mission-critical enterprise e-mail and back end support functions.

The budget to design and develop this website is approximately \$75,000, not including translation into French. The funding is divided into pre-determined categories, with some room for flexibility. The financial framework for this project is described in more detail in the Request for Proposals (RFP).

Project Background

CED is intended to address problems experienced by a community and its residents so both the community and everyone in it experiences economic sustainability. These are simple objectives, yet the Canadian women's community continues to face issues around economic security that neither the traditional labour market nor CED is effectively addressing. The result is that WEC, its partners and women in our networks are increasingly frustrated with the resources available to women within CED and in business generally across Canada.

Women are feeling left out of the loop, with minimal influence and with little impact on community activities and decisions aimed at economic security for all. Not unlike the traditional employer-employee labour market, opportunities for women in CED, both rural and urban, are not on the radar or, if known, are seen as exclusive for certain segments of women.

Both agencies resourcing women and the women themselves are unable to find suitable resources and if and when they do, they describe them as inaccessible or not appropriate for supporting their lived realities.

Across Canada, the range of issues impacting women's economic opportunities, participation in CED leadership and other socio-economic activities is vast but slow to change. For many readers of this RFI, these issues may not be new but they have sadly plagued the gender equality agenda throughout history.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Project Background (continue d)

Despite an unacceptably slow pace of change, WEC, the women they intersect with and the agencies and individuals who support women around the issue of economic security have hope and optimism for a brighter future. There are good examples of how women are being empowered economically in Canada and there are great CED resources that support women and agencies to participate and succeed. Best of all, we live in an age where most Canadians are connected to the internet. We believe that this project, focused on leveraging the internet for women's CED resourcing, is a game changer.

The Jigsaw Puzzle Project was created to increase resources and other opportunities for:

- 1) Diverse women, and
- 2) For-profit, not-for-profit and public sector stakeholders who engage and support women in community economic development.

Reaching this goal will contribute to the sustainable livelihoods of women, agencies and communities across Canada.

This goal is to be achieved by developing a national web platform with three primary objectives:

1. To support community development (CD) stakeholders, women-led organizations, women's enterprises and women, to connect to women-centred CED resources, other related resources and to best practices, by creating a web-based virtual platform with an interactive, updateable map showing local and national resources. The platform will facilitate communication and sharing within the fields of CED, enterprise, women's organizations and women.
2. To heighten the awareness of stakeholders about the barriers that limit women's equal participation in the marketplace and encourage them to review their resources, including policies, procedures and other initiatives.
3. To provide opportunities for the Women's Economic Council to collect important data about the landscape of CED stakeholders, women's organizations and others who support women and women-led enterprises across Canada.

Note: A detailed Needs Assessment was compiled after thorough consultations across Canada. Results from the assessment inform our high level requirements for our envisioned web platform. Detailed requirements and user profiles will be provided to successful candidates along with the RFP when it is distributed.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Requirements

The selected web design and development agency will be responsible for delivery of the following required services:

1. Identification and implementation of a stable, robust and user-friendly **content management system** to support WEC web assets. This will involve selection of a suitable CMS based on a business case for a robust, secure, and stable solution. The solution must be user-friendly, i.e. feature WYSIWG interfaces that do not require extensive familiarity with HTML.

Note: WEC sites are currently maintained on WordPress. Only open source content management systems will be considered.

2. Site optimization for **seamless mobile consumption** (responsive design), i.e., based on latest version of HTML/XML (note: the separate development and support of mobile apps is out-of-scope).
3. **Site development and design**, including creation of navigation, templates and style sheets, and design application (optimization and customization as required) of WEC identity and marketing assets; migration of existing content and features; validation and testing; CMS training for WEC staff.
4. **Web site development and support** – functionality that includes static content (including editorial pages, documents, still images and video galleries, etc.); dynamic content (including search, interactive maps, events calendar, blog and RSS and social sharing feeds); member registration including business/attraction/package data collection and database management (note: WEC does not require transactional/e-commerce features, although this is a potential future consideration)
5. Technical and design **support** for WEC social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.); management of site hosting, back up, maintenance, domain registration, database requirements and related functions - quoted separately when responding to the RFP.
6. **Design** for web and digital media applications and customization of WEC identity and marketing assets for digital media; design and maintenance of templates and style sheets.
7. Implementation and ongoing technical support for **hosted enterprise e-mail** solution.
8. **SEO** and **analytics** support.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Requirements (continued)

WEC and its stakeholders envision a web platform that is a vibrant “Women's Centre” with the following “rooms” or functionalities:

1. Welcoming Place

The reception area is the landing page of the virtual women-centred CED centre. This is the place that warmly greets diverse women who may be more confident communicating in languages other than English and French, and also welcomes the agencies working in CED interested in supporting women in CED. WEC consultations have consistently stressed the need for this online reception area to be welcoming for women. Focus groups cited examples of existing CED agencies that felt cold, corporate and intimidating. Potential users of WEC’s site want the reception area to convey that this is a safe space for women to visit and interact with.

2. Mentoring and Meeting 1-1

Women felt it important to be able to meet 1-1 with other women, experts and agency representatives. Gone are the days when people need to travel or take a plane to another province or territory to receive superior guidance or to work together with others. Video conferencing provides unprecedented value, especially for isolated women in remote communities where collaboration and sharing are difficult, yet part of a vital link in the chain that leads to success in CED and other business activities.

3. Networking in Groups

The benefits of virtual group meetings multiply by the number of people meeting. While most stakeholders agreed that virtual group meetings do not have the same impact as face-to-face meetings, they also agreed that internet meetings are cost-effective, efficient in terms of commuting time, easier to attend and possibly better at sharing digital information. How resources can be innovatively viewed and shared during group meetings is another important element to be considered in the design phase of this project.

4. Library

Stakeholders felt that resources needed to be supported by an open source platform. Principles behind open source include collaboration, transparency and rapid prototyping and are proven catalysts for innovation and community sharing. Users from across Canada should be able to add to this library so that it remains a constant, current source of documents, tools, videos, podcasts etc., easily accessed and routinely updated.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Requirements (continued)

5. Referral Service/CED Map

Stakeholders indicated that there was a general lack of awareness of CED ecosystems - “hotspots” locally and across the country benefiting women, which includes CED agencies and individuals working together from all sectors. Women indicated that they could benefit from knowing who is out there and what is working. Agencies expressed similar sentiments, but also felt a CED map or directory could help them make better client referrals. Most women identified geography as the single most important filter on a CED map, but there are secondary criteria that need to be included in a filtering process that helps users locate useful supports for growing and developing businesses and social enterprises.

6. Marketplace

More and more Canadians are shopping online and most want to shop based on certain criteria i.e. buy local, buy ethical or buy socially responsible products and services, to name a few. Some stakeholders suggested the WEC platform explore hosting a marketplace supporting women or at the very least, provide information about reputable virtual marketplaces that women can use - either as a seller or a buyer. (Organizations offering services e.g. financial or training services might also benefit from an online marketplace.)

7. News

Women and others in CED want access to news from across Canada about women, CED, women’s enterprises and related topics. They also want to share their own news with the wider community.

8. Advocacy

There are many barriers that negatively impact women’s participation and success in CED. Stakeholders agreed that the new platform could help facilitate dialogue, collect and report the many different voices of women, create and develop written positions/proposals and actively advocate for change with governments and others in positions of power.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- WEC reserves the right to negotiate with proponents, seek clarification from proponents regarding their submission responses and invite modifications to the submission responses submitted.
- WEC retains the right to withdraw or modify this RFI at any time without notice and without obligation to proponents.
- WEC may waive compliance with the requirements of this RFI and consider a submission response that does not meet all of the requirements of this RFI.
- Your submission is provided at your own risk. If, prior to the deadline for submission you fail to notify WEC of an error and your submission is selected, you shall not be entitled to any compensation or time by reason of the error or its later correction.
- WEC shall not be in any way responsible for or liable for any costs associated with your submission and you shall not make claim to WEC for any such cost or expenses.
- No part of this RFI will become part of any final agreement between WEC and the successful proponent unless specifically incorporated into a final, written agreement.
- Any or all contents of your submission may become part of the final agreement.
- By responding with a submission, you agree to waive any right to claim damages against WEC for any reason, cause, or thing arising out of the RFI process.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Submission guidelines

Your submission must:

- Be received by the specified submission deadline.
- Be submitted electronically via e-mail (only) as a PDF file (including any attachments).
- Not exceed 25 pages in length, excluding work samples.
- Be accompanied by a cover letter certifying the accuracy of all information contained in your submission and acknowledging your offer of services according to the Terms of Reference and the Terms and Conditions.
- Include responses to all questions in the Questionnaire section.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS (continued)

Questionnaire

Please cite each question in framing your responses, and provide clear and concise answers.

General

- Provide a brief overview of your company including legal name, address and web site. Identify the representative authorized to negotiate on behalf of your company and include full contact information.
- Provide a brief history of your company including years in business. Describe its ownership and management structure, and its lines of business.
- Provide a representative client list. Identify any past or current relationships with women's groups and related businesses or organizations located in Canada.
- Provide three client references from organizations that can speak directly to your expertise and capabilities with accounts and assignments of a similar nature. Include name, title and full contact information.
- Provide any additional information you believe will be helpful in assessing your capabilities.

Expectations

- Describe your company's values and approach to client relationship and account management. What could WEC expect from your company? Illustrate your response with examples.
- What would you characterize as key competitive challenges, opportunities and trends that WEC should be mindful of relative to its web and digital presence?

Required Services

- In this RFI WEC sets out its expectations with respect to the attributes and capabilities it expects of a partner in marketing (i.e., synergy, creativity, knowledge, expertise, proactivity, professionalism and accountability). Describe your qualifications according to the specific requirements enumerated in the Terms of Reference. In your response, highlight relevant experience with similar engagements and provide links to sites and functionality that you have developed. In your response, provide details of your proposed solutions and offerings with respect to web site hosting and technical support; CMS platform training and support; Enterprise e-mail
- Outline your approach to requirements and your project management methodology. Specify expectations of WEC, as well as any assumptions.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Required Services (continued)

- Outline your approach to pricing your services, identifying fixed and variable costs and specifying applicable hour rates for personnel, as well as any assumptions.
- With reference to WEC requirements, outline your experience with similar clients and indicate the level or range of annual fees and costs WEC could expect to incur. Specify any assumptions.

Evaluation Methodology

Submissions will be evaluated against the following criteria. Proponents shortlisted for further consideration will be interviewed and will be required to make a presentation of their services. Quotations will be requested from firms selected for finalist consideration (date to be advised).

| Criteria | Weight |
|--|--------|
| Demonstrated experience and ability to meet requirements as evidenced in thoroughness of proposal and quality of client references | 20.00% |
| Qualifications and expertise as supported by proposed approach and work samples | 30.00% |
| Competitiveness of fee and cost basis | 30.00% |
| Shortlist presentation | 20.00% |

Submission

It is your responsibility to seek clarification of any matter that you consider unclear before submitting your response by the deadline specified herein for submission of written questions. WEC is not responsible for any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of this RFI document or requirements. Responses must be submitted via e-mail only to:

Janet Kranz, Co-Manager | Women’s Economic Council Collective
Email: janetk@womenseconomiccouncil.ca
www.womenseconomiccouncil.ca

The deadline for submission is: March 17, 2017