



The Corporation of The Township of Assiginack

Request for Proposal

Website Hosting, Design, Development and Support Services

NO.2025-01

Sealed envelopes to be marked "Website Services"

ISSUE DATE: Monday, March 6, 2025

PROPOSAL QUESTIONS REQUIRED BY: Friday March 14, 2025

(Answers will be posted Thursday March 20, 2025, on Assiginack.ca)

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Tuesday March 25, 2025 @ 4pm

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION TO:

The Township of Assiginack

156 Arthur Street

P.O. Box 238

Manitowaning, ON P0P 1N0

ATTN: Alton Hobbs, CAO

LOWEST OR ANY PROPOSAL NOT NECESSARILY ACCEPTED

FAXED PROPOSALS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE

1.0 General Description of Project

The Township of Assiginack invites qualified website design firms/consultants to submit proposals to redesign, upgrade, migrate existing email and data, and host our municipal website found at www.assiginack.ca.

The goals of the design for the Township's website are to:

- a) Provide simple electronic access to public services, public domain information, and serve as a communications tool on various types of hardware used by the end user.
 - b) Develop a new Township website with functionality for both municipal staff and residents and create a user-friendly website that offers robust search capabilities and enhances community engagement.
 - c) Ensure that the Township provides the most up-to-date opportunities for the distribution of information to the public, including e-services such as an events calendar and booking widget.
 - d) Provide information aimed at promoting economic development and attracting new residents and businesses to the municipality.
 - e) Comply with WCAG 2.0 accessibility standards and strive to meet W3C guidelines for content and accessibility. The Website must comply with all applicable regulations of the Accessibility for Ontarians and Disabilities Act, 2015 (AODA), with regards to the goods and services component herein. Specifically, Ontario Regulation 429/07: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards.
 - f) Be accessible on any mobile device with the same look, feel, and content.
 - g) Provide website hosting services that allow improved functionality for staff, and data migration of existing email.
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2.0 Background

The Township of Assiginack is located on the eastern portion of Manitoulin Island. The main community, Manitowaning (the first European settlement on Manitoulin Island), is nestled in the picturesque Manitowaning Bay.

2.1 Core Services

The Township of Assiginack is responsible for various activities governed by Ontario's Municipal Act, S.O. 2001 including taxation, roads, water and wastewater servicing, planning and building, recreation, emergency services, bylaw enforcement, airport maintenance, and general government administration.

The role and influence of municipalities and citizen expectations for quality service, value for the taxpayers dollar, and effective governance are on the rise. There is a commitment by the Township to the delivery of quality public services, facilities, and infrastructure and strives to meet the day-to-day requirements in the community through a wide range of core services.

The Township aims for service excellence while offering a variety of amenities, facilities, programs, and services that residents, visitors, and businesses need and expect.

Council and Administration of the Township of Assiginack have experienced several changes and transitions in the past few years, including but not limited to staff turnover, aging infrastructure in need of repair, evolving regulatory standards, increased need for accountability, and increased public expectations for efficient and cost-effective service delivery.

Small municipalities often face communication challenges due to limited resources. It is harder to engage effectively with their communities. A well-designed website can help address these issues by offering easy access to information, improving transparency, and fostering greater interaction. This strengthens the relationship between local government and residents, ensuring more efficient and effective communication.

3.0 Scope of Work

The successful Consultant will facilitate the implementation of the Township's website design process, produce the following deliverables, and must ensure all components of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2015 (AODA) Standards are complied with.

a) The scope of this project is to implement, design, and host a new municipal website with content that will allow for municipal IT and staff to easily maneuver, maintain, and control in-house, while maximizing efficiencies with staff time.

b) The resulting website must include the following deliverables:

1. Website Design and Development:
 - Create a visually appealing and modern design.
 - Develop a responsive layout that works on all devices.
 - Implement a user-friendly navigation structure.
2. Performance Optimization:
 - Optimize website loading times.
 - Ensure the website is compliant with web performance best practices.

3. Accessibility Compliance:
 - Ensure the website meets WCAG standards for accessibility.
 4. Content Management System:
 - Implement a CMS that allows for easy updates and management of content.
 5. Search Functionality:
 - Integrate a search feature that allows users to find information quickly.
 6. Contact Information:
 - Ensure contact details are prominently displayed and easily accessible.
 6. Analytics:
 - Ensure user data is easily gathered by staff.
 7. Content Requirements:
 - Must be able to provide an event booking system within the content of the site or be able to incorporate a link to bring users to the Towns current event booking system.
 - Must include a news pop up feature and newsletter option.
 - Links to social media accounts must be included.
 - Must have the ability to issue alerts for emergency situations.
 - Must have a tab or section for online forms, reports, etc.
 - Council and staff contact us form.
 - Information on local events or things to do with a calendar.
 - Resources for residents and businesses.
 - Emergency Services information.
 - Taxation and Financial information.
 - Allow for audio/video streaming to Facebook.
 - Integration into a digital records management system ie eScribe.
 - Reporting of metrics.
- c) Staff must have the ability to post and remove information in a variety of formats at any given time, including the integration of Facebook and other social media platforms. A maintenance plan must be included.
- d) Must support easy browsing via mobile phone and tablet devices. Public access to all features on the website is not dependent on a specific browser.
- e) Staff training, and as required, technical support for problem resolution, software updating, and assistance with the implementation of future applications.
- f) The Township wishes to ensure that the website is responsive and allows for interactive collaboration from the public.

g) The new design of the Township's website shall include a collaboration of the current website, in addition to recommendations from the successful candidate for this RFP.

h) The Website must comply with all applicable regulations of the Accessibility for Ontarians and Disabilities Act, 2015 (AODA), with regards to the provision of goods and services components herein. Specifically, Ontario Regulation 429/07: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards.

i) It will be the expectation that this endeavor will be handled in conjunction with municipal staff to ensure the Township is accurately represented, appropriate branding is considered, and expectations for content are met.

j) Ability to conduct e-commerce online.

k) Hosting services with increased server capacity.

3.1 General Description

The following is a general description of the process expected in undertaking the website redevelopment project. The Township encourages modification of these general steps by the successful candidate to achieve an enhanced, more efficient and/or effective outcome that is true to the process previously noted:

a) Initial start-up meeting.

b) Proposal submitted for expected work plan and schedule, to include proposed project milestones, breakdown of major tasks, and a time/task matrix to clearly identify to the Township how this work will be carried out and how long it will take to complete the work.

c) Clearly identify the role and tasks that are required of the Township.

d) Implement approved web design.

e) Provide all necessary training for staff.

f) Assist with website launch date.

g) Provide ongoing technical support as required.

h) Project completion deadline is December 2025.

The recommended strategies and implementation plans will be required to be fiscally responsible and mindful of the resource and staffing capacity limitations of the Township.

4.0 Contact

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to:

Stasia Carr, Clerk
Township of Assiginack
156 Arthur Street
Assiginack, ON P0P 1N0
(Phone) 705-859-3196 (ext.206)

Email – scarr@assiginack.ca
Website – www.assiginack.ca

Questions via email are the preferred method of contact. The deadline for questions is March 14, 2025. All questions and answers will then be distributed on the Township website. By March 20, 2025.

5.0 Proposed Project Schedule

- **RFP Issued: March 6, 2025**
- **Deadline for questions is March 14, 2025**
- **Deadline for responses posted on the Township Website is March 20, 2025**
- **Deadline for Submission of Proposals: **March 25, 2025, 4:00 p.m.****
- **Awarding of Proposals: April 15, 2025**

6.0 Consultant Requirements

Minimum requirements by the Consultant for submission of a proposal in response to the RFP shall include the following:

- a) Demonstrated familiarity with the development and implementation of website design and development.
- b) Demonstrated experience, competence, and qualifications of the Consultant and the participating staff successfully providing similar services to public entities (three references will be required).
- c) Demonstrated understanding and experience in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2015 (AODA) and establishing appropriate systems that support the legal requirements of the Township.

- d) Understanding of the requested services and appropriateness of the proposed work program.
 - e) Ability to perform the work in a timely manner, availability of staff (if included), and contingency plans. A detailed work schedule is to be included with project completion no later than May 3, 2025.
 - f) Proposals must include the Consultant's registered business license information.
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7.0 Consultant's Work Schedule

The Consultant's work schedule will begin immediately upon the award of contract and is expected to continue until the completion of the website design, all initial training has commenced, and the newly developed website has been launched. It is expected that all invoices will be submitted by the deadline and completion date of the website.

8.0 RFP Proposal Submission Requirements

Consultants interested in providing these services must prepare and submit a Proposal that includes:

a) **Cover Letter**

The cover letter is to be signed by an officer of the company authorized to execute a contract with the Township.

b) **Consultant Qualifications**

This section shall describe the areas of expertise of current permanent staff, whether a sole proprietor or members of the team, and the scope of services that can be provided by the firm.

c) **Key Personnel**

Include a proposed project management structure. Identify the key contact for the project and all personnel, if applicable, who will be assigned to work on this project, including a description of their abilities, qualifications, and experience. Include résumés for all key individuals. There can be no change of key personnel once the proposal is submitted without the prior written approval of the Township.

d) **Sub-Contractors**

Identify any portion of the scope of work that will be sub-contracted. Include firm qualifications and key personnel, telephone number, and contact person for all subcontractors. The Township reserves the right to approve or reject all Consultants or internal staff performing consulting services, proposed by the Consultant during or after the Consultant review and selection process.

e) **Project Work Plan**

A description of the project understanding, detailed work approach, and methodology will be

identified. The work plan should list specific tasks and any specific considerations, options, or alternatives.

f) Project Schedule

Propose a timeline for completion of the review including start date, milestones, and target date of completion. Any assumptions regarding the turnaround time for Township Council or staff review should be clearly noted.

g) Budget

Provide a detailed fee proposal, listed by task, for the services identified in the scope of work section of this proposal. Identify sub-tasks and the respective cost in the fee proposal as necessary. This section of the proposal shall include a professional fee schedule (hourly fee chart) for the Consultant (and if applicable the Consultant's personnel) and the sub-contractor's key personnel who will be working on this project. Hourly fees for additional or optional services that may be required shall also be included. Unless specified in the submission, the professional fee schedule shall include any costs associated with complying with the Township's insurance requirements. The fee charged shall include travel costs to attend meetings with staff and to present the website to the Township Council.

h) References

A list of projects completed by the Consultant, under which services like those required by this RFP were performed, shall be listed in the proposal. An emphasis should be placed on projects undertaken within the last five (5) years and if those projects undertaken by public agencies were in similar-sized communities. Include a brief description of the services, dates the services were provided, and name and telephone number of references familiar with the services provided.

i) Work Samples

Provide brief descriptions of two projects completed that included website design by or under the direction of your firm. Include in your description the techniques used in the process and the outcome(s).

j) Presentation

Consultants may be requested to be available for an interview with Township staff and possibly with members of Council as part of the final selection process. The lead member(s) of the consulting team will be expected to attend any interviews scheduled with the Township.

k) Deadline and Delivery

Submissions sealed in an envelope, with a hard copy along with a digital copy in pdf format, will be received by the undersigned at the Township Office, 156 Arthur Street, Assiginack, Ontario, until 4:00 p.m., local time, March 25, 2025, as determined by the clock in the Assiginack Township Office. Submissions received after closing time will not be considered.

The Corporation of the Township of Assiginack
Stasia Carr, Clerk
156 Arthur Street, PO Box 238
Assiginack, ON POP 1H0

- Late Proposals will NOT be accepted and will be returned unopened to the Vendor, no exceptions.
 - Email or Facsimile responses for the Request for Proposal will NOT be accepted.
 - Submission delivered to a location other than which is stated in this document and the submission fails to be delivered to the Township prior to the closing date and time.
 - Proposals must be signed by the person authorized to sign on behalf of the Vendor and bind the Vendor to statements made in response to this Request for Proposal.
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9.0 Harmonized Sales Tax

The quoted prices must clearly show the Harmonized Sales Tax as a separate item from the total price submission.

10.0 Indemnification, Hold Harmless, and Insurance Requirements

In addition to other standard contractual terms, the Township will require the selected vendor to comply with indemnification, hold harmless and insurance requirements as outlined below:

The Consultant shall indemnify and hold harmless the Township of Assiginack (including any of its bodies, agencies, councils and associations and their servants, agents, officers, directors, elected officials, successors, assigns, employees, and personal representatives and each of them) from and against any loss resulting from negligence, claim, demand, damages, liability, and costs and permitted assigns. This provision shall survive the termination of any agreement resulting from this RFP.

The vendor shall procure and maintain, for the duration of this contract, insurance against claims for injuries to persons or damages to property which may arise from or in connection with the performance of the work hereunder by the Consultant, their agents, representatives, employees or sub-contractors. The cost of such insurance shall be paid by the Consultant. Insurance shall meet or exceed the following unless otherwise approved by the Township.

10.1 Insurance Requirements

- a) Worker's Compensation coverage as required by the Province of Ontario.
 - b) Comprehensive or Commercial General Liability: \$2,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage.
 - c) Professional Liability Errors and Omissions: \$2,000,000
 - d) Automobile Liability: \$2,000,000 combined single limit per accident for bodily injury and property damage.
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11.0 Equal Opportunity

The Township is an equal opportunity employer and requires all Respondents to comply with policies and regulations concerning equal opportunity. The Respondent, in the performance of this contract, agrees not to discriminate in its employment due to an employee's or applicant's race, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual preference, age, physical handicap or any other characteristic protected by law.

12.0 Accessibility

The Township is committed to and working toward ensuring Township services are accessible to all. We strive to meet or exceed the standards set by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act ("AODA") which are rules established by the Province to help businesses and organizations identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. AODA requires accessibility of goods, services, facilities, accommodations, employment as well as information and communication.

13.0 Sustainability

The Township recognizes that being sustainable is a responsibility of the Township that is essential to the long-term economic prosperity, the social well-being of its residents and protecting environmental capacity and can only occur through community engagement and involvement.

14.0 Review and Evaluation Process

The Township of Assiginack uses a value-based approach to selecting consultants and will evaluate each proposal based on its own merit, giving specific attention to completeness of detail, experience of the project team, and other factors as set out in the criteria listed below which states the weight or value assigned to each category.

The evaluation will be based on the prescribed criteria, but not solely limited thereto, and any other relevant information provided by the Consultant(s). The Township reserves the right to prioritize and weigh the importance of each criterion confidentially. Selected proponents may be short-listed for interviews at the discretion of the Township.

CRITERIA	VALUE
Accessibility & Flexibility	15%
Navigation & Look and Feel	15%
Website & Graphic Design Experience	25%
Content Management System Features	15%
Proposed Work Plan & Timelines of the Project	5%
Fee Structure	
• Website Design	10%
• Ongoing Support Costs	10%
• Optional Requirements	5%
TOTAL SCORE:	100%

15.0 Terms and Conditions

ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSALS

i) The Township of Assiginack reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the proposals submitted in response to this Request for Proposal and may award the work to other than the lowest cost proposal. Proposals will be assessed considering the evaluation criteria. The Township of Assiginack reserves the right to interview any number of respondents regardless of their score. The Request for Proposal should not be construed as an agreement to purchase services. The Township will be under no obligation to receive further information, whether written or oral, from any Proponent. The Township reserves the right to award in whole or in part.

ii) Proposals must be completed with due care. All proposals must conform to the instructions in this Document. If a Proposal does not conform in every way, even in ways which may seem to Proponents to be innocuous, that Proposal may be rejected by the Township as improper and may not be considered at all.

iii) Neither acceptance of a Proposal nor execution of a Contract will constitute approval of any activity or development contemplated in any proposal that requires any approval, permit or license pursuant to any Federal, Provincial, regional district or municipal statute, regulation or by-law.

DEFINITION OF CONTRACT

Notice in writing to a Proponent of the acceptance of its proposal by the Township and the subsequent full execution of a written Contract will constitute a Contract for the goods or services, and no Proponent will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to the goods or services until the occurrence of both such events.

LIABILITY OF ERRORS

While the Township has used considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation of information in this Request for Proposal, the information contained in this Request for Proposal is supplied solely as a guideline for Proponents. The information is not guaranteed or warranted to be accurate by the Township, nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive. Nothing in this Request for Proposal is intended to relieve Proponents from forming their own opinions and conclusions with respect to the matters addressed in this Request for Proposal.

AGREEMENT WITH TERMS

By submitting a Proposal, the Proponent agrees to all terms and conditions in this Request for Proposal. Proponents who have obtained the Request for Proposal electronically must not alter any portion of the document, except for adding the information requested. Doing so will invalidate the proposal.

MODIFICATION OF TERMS

The Township reserves the right to modify the terms of the Request for Proposal at any time at its sole discretion.

OWNERSHIP OF PROPOSALS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

All documents, including proposals, submitted to the Township become the property of the Township. They will be received and held in confidence by the Township, subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

USE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

This document, or any portion thereof, may not be used for any purpose other than the submission of proposals.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

Information pertaining to the Township obtained by the Proponent because of participation in this project is confidential and must not be disclosed without written authorization from the Township.

ARBITRATION

All disputes arising out of or in connection with the Contract must, unless the parties agree, be referred to and finally resolved by arbitration to the Commercial Arbitration Act.

INDEMNITY

The Consultant will indemnify and save harmless the Township, its employees and agents from and against all claims, demands, losses, damages, costs, and expenses made against or incurred, suffered or sustained by the Township at any time or times (either before or after the expiration or sooner termination of this Contract) where the same or any of them are based upon or arise out of or from anything done or omitted to be done by the Consultant or by any servant, employee, officer, director or sub-Consultant of the Consultant pursuant to the Contract excepting always liability arising out of the Independent acts of the Township.

CONTRACT AWARD

Provided that at least one of the Proposals received meets the approval of the evaluation committee, a recommendation for awarding will be made based on the evaluation. The award of the contract is subject to the best value for the Township.

- i) On approval of the evaluation of the committee's recommendation by Council, the Successful Respondent will be required to enter into a formal contract agreement.
- ii) Written notification to the Successful Respondent and the issue of a Purchase Order shall result in a binding contract between the Township and the Successful Respondent unless otherwise stated and will result in the execution of a formal contract agreement.

16.0 General

- i) Any potential conflict of interest shall be identified and described in detail. If a conflict of interest does exist, the Township may, at its discretion, withhold the assignment from the Consultant until the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the Township.

If during the conduct of the assignment, the Consultant is retained by another client giving rise to a potential conflict of interest, then the Consultant shall inform the Township and if a significant conflict of interest is deemed to exist by the Township, then the Consultant shall

- a) refuse the new assignment; or
- b) take such steps as are necessary to remove the conflict of interest.
- ii) The Consultant shall be expected to enter into an agreement with the Township concerning the products expected and the total upset cost of the work.

iii) The Township will not bear any cost involved in the preparation or submission of proposals received as a result of this Request for Proposal, site inspections, interviews, or any other services that may be requested as part of the evaluation process.

iv) All information and proposals collected by the project shall become the property of the Township.

v) Revised proposals will not be called if only minor changes are contemplated.

vi) The Consultant shall be required to assume responsibility for all services offered in their proposal regardless of whether the Consultant performs them in-house. The Consultant shall be totally responsible for the adherence by sub-Consultants to all provisions of the contract. The Consultant shall be the sole point of contact for contractual matters, including payment of any or all charges resulting from the contract.

vii) All Consultants will be informed in writing of the results of this Request for Proposals.

viii) The proposal must be signed by the person(s) authorized to sign on behalf of the Consultant and to bind the Consultant to statements made in response to this request for Proposal.

ix) By submission of a clear and detailed written notice, the Consultant may amend or withdraw its proposal prior to the closing date and time. Upon closing time, all proposals become irrevocable for a period of 120 days from the date of closing. By submission of a proposal, the Consultant agrees that should its proposal be deemed successful, the Consultant would enter a Contract with the Township.

xi) The Consultant will not change the wording of its proposal after closing and no words or comments will be added to the proposal unless requested by the Township for purposes of clarification.

xii) In the event the Consultant desires to take exception to any of the terms or conditions set forth in this Request for Proposals, said exceptions must be clearly identified in the response to the Request for Proposals. Exceptions or deviations must not be added to the Proposal pages but must be a separate document accompanying the Consultant's Proposal.

xiii) The Consultant shall be expected to commence work on this project immediately following receipt of formal notification of the award of the project.