

RFP Questions and Answers

1. Is the bidding process open to international participants?

Yes

2. Will the project execution be onsite or offshore?

Activities will take place virtually.

3. Is there any specific budget for this project?

There is no specific budget for this project. Please align your budget to the Scope of Work while providing a competitive price that will present the best value for the services.

4. Can we schedule a call?

We are unable to schedule calls with interested parties.

5. Are there specific guidelines or standards for accessibility to be followed beyond WCAG 2.2 AA?

Pact not only aims to make our website more inclusive, in line with our core values, but as a recipient of U.S. Government funding, we are also required to make our electronic information accessible to persons with disabilities. A focus on an understandable, operable and perceivable website is needed that includes but is not limited to text readability, use of captions and alt text, color use, color contrast, navigation flow, and labeling.

6. How many stakeholders will be involved in the review and approval processes?

Proposals will be reviewed by a procurement selection committee comprised of 5-6 relevant individuals.

7. What are the specific performance metrics or targets for the project?

The vendor will deliver a functional, accessible, and secure website that incorporates SEO and other website best practices to improve site and content visibility. Pact's Integrated Communications team reviews quarterly website analytics that include organic search traffic, pageviews, document downloads, and bounce rates and engagement time for key pages. We work to make steady improvements in these metrics, and would expect our vendor to partner with us in this effort.

8. What are the roles of administrators post-launch in terms of content management?

Pact Administrators are responsible for content management, reporting issues to the vendor and providing the necessary information and connections to relevant Pact staff to resolve those issues.

9. What level of security measures are required for the project?

Pact has no custom security measures required beyond standard security measures provided by a hosting service.

10. What are the specific objectives for applying AI and data analysis?

We do not currently have objectives for applying AI and data analysis.

11. Will the website require multi-lingual support?

No, not at this time.

12. Are there any specific requirements for mobile app development?

The website must continue to be mobile responsive, but there are no additional requirements for mobile app development.

13. What are the key objectives for SEO optimization?

Some of the key goals for SEO optimization are to increase organic traffic to the site, strengthening domain authority, improve rankings for key terms in search and increase average time on page for key pages.

14. Will there be any integration with external systems like CRM or financial software?

No, there are no integrations with a CRM or financial software at this time.

15. Are there any specific design guidelines or branding requirements for the website?

Yes, the website must follow Pact's Brand Standards, which will be supplied to the chosen offeror.

16. Is there a need for continuous support and maintenance post-launch?

Yes, this RFP includes both hosting and ongoing support and maintenance.

17. How many web administrators does the organization expect to have at launch?

We currently have five web administrators.

18. Are there specific Service Level requirements around uptime and resolution response times?

We aim for the industry standard of 99.9% for uptime. For resolution response times, please refer to Section II, subsection C, General Requirements of the RFP.

19. How many firms are responding to this RFP?

We will not know how many firms will respond to the RFP until the closing date.

20. Is the current provider submitting as part of this RFP? If not, why is the organization moving away from the current provider?

We do not know but anticipate that they will.

21. Are you seeking *only* a new hosting provider? Or do you require any website development and/or design services?

The RFP is for a new hosting provider and ongoing maintenance and support, which may include new development and/or design services.

22. Are you seeking a rebuild of the current website "as-is", a rebuild based on the current design, or a new design for your website? (If applicable)

We are not seeking to re-design the current website at this time.

23. What technology is the current website currently using? (i.e. the CMS platform, code language, and hosting platform)

Drupal version 9. See RFP Section II C for current hosting information.

24. Does Pact have any internal resources that are involved in the day to day management of the website? (Marketing Team, Design Team, IT Staff, Content Copywriters etc.)

Pact's Integrated Communications team is responsible for the day-to-day management of the website, with occasional support from the IT team, as needed.

25. Could you share with us some of the pressing issues/components of your website that you are hoping to work on with this new partnership?

Over the last several years we have redesigned most aspects of the website and are not looking to redesign the site at this time. We are interested in a partner who can help us leverage the site for increased visibility for the organization and work that we do around the world.

26. If Pact has an internal development team, who on the Pact team will be leading the development?

Pact's Integrated Communications team oversees the website, with occasional support from the IT team, as needed. We do not have an internal technical website development team.

27. Does your team have a Figma design of the website?

No.

28. What is the expected timeline for developing the website?

There are approximately 7.5 weeks from award notification to when the current website contract expires. The website must remain online and fully functional during this period. We are not seeking to develop a new website at this time.

29. Does your team prefer to review a Word document or a PPT version of the proposal? Are solution diagrams needed?

Please refer to Section III of the RFP for detailed submission instructions, including format.

30. Can Pact extend the deadline by a week?

No, we are unable to extend the deadline.

31. Is there an incumbent for this contract? If so, please provide the incumbent name, current contract number, duration, historical level of effort, and contract value.

Yes, however, we are unable to provide this information due to confidentiality.

32. Will the incumbent be eligible to bid on this project?

Yes.

33. How large is the current website (pages, files, etc.)?

The website currently has approximately 1,700 unique URLs, including pages, files, etc.

34. Is there any scope for new content development?

There are no current plans for new content development.

35. How many users are required to be trained?

There are five current Administrators of the website.

36. What are the major pain points with your current site?

Please refer to question 25 above.

37. Is there any preference for a hosting platform solution? Are you open to cloud hosting such as Acquia?

Please refer to the RFP Section II, subsection C for hosting information and preferences.

38. Pricing format is not provided; can the pricing be provided in Excel in our format?

Yes, per Section III, subsection D of the RFP, Excel files are permitted.

39. Are there any performance metrics or KPIs we must adhere to for website maintenance?

Please see question 7 above.

40. What are the data retention policies and backup requirements for the hosting environment?

Daily backups are required for the hosting environment.

41. How many user support hours are typically utilized per month?

The number of hours varies due to a variety of factors, including identification of technical issues and complexity of required updates such as security patches and bug fixes. However, it is less than 20 hours per month for a standard month.

42. What level of access and permissions will our team have for content management and updates?

The selected vendor will have administrator access as required to perform activities necessary to successfully complete the Scope of Work.

43. What are the regular maintenance tasks required to ensure the website's optimal performance?

These include but are not limited to installing updates, completing bug fixes, making regular backups, identifying dead links and errors, resolving technical issues and testing page load speed.

44. How frequently should server and software updates be performed?

Server and software updates should be done on a monthly basis and more frequently, as required, and server should be patched with security updates within one week as they become available.

45. Please provide the current average monthly unique pageviews received for the public-facing site corporate experience. This will allow us to accurately price a Cloud-managed hosting solution.

Average monthly unique pageviews are approximately 41,000.

46. How much weight is given for the new cloud hosting solution to be in alignment with Pact's sustainability goals vs the price? For example, if the new Cloud host managed solution aligns 100% with Pact's CSR and environmental goals but has higher pricing compared to other solutions with less alignment, will the proposal score be lower?

Proposals will be scored based on the evaluation criteria outlined in Section IV of the RFP.

47. Regarding this criterion: Designated Pact staff should have full access permissions to the hosting environment. What kind of tasks does Pact staff need to accomplish that require full access to the hosting environment?

Pact staff should not need to complete regular tasks, but require access in case urgent action is needed and Vendor is unavailable.

48. What plan is currently used on Pantheon?

Performance.

49. Can the hosting remain on Pantheon with the same plan?

Yes.

50. Do you have an existing tool like Cloudflare or other WAF protection against DOS and DDOS attacks?

Our current hosting relationship includes some protection measures against DOS and DDOS attacks.

51. Are there any other hosting-adjacent services that need to be considered as part of the bid, such as search indexing (it appears that the current site uses an AddSearch plugin) or transactional mail service (emails from the site to users)?

Add Search is currently the only third-party tool being utilized on the site. Additionally, there is an integration with MailerLite, an email delivery platform, and emails to Pact through the online contact form.

52. On average, how many hours have been required for User Support, and in what time zone would you like to establish service hours?

Please refer to question 21 above on hours. Pact's website administrators are located in the Eastern, Central and Mountain time zones of the United States.

53. In addition to regular maintenance hours, should the bid include hours aimed at enhancements, such as improving the content editing experience so that updating content, imagery, and templates would not require our support and could be easily done by Pact's team?

Your proposal should include any recommendations you have for delivering a functional, accessible and secure website that incorporates SEO and website best practices to improve site and content visibility.

54. Do you have a specific time the proposal is due at or any time on the 8th?

No. However, all emails should be received on June 8th.

55. Would you need any content creation services as part of the contract, or would it simply be to place/modify aspects of the website based on collateral provided?

While we are not looking to redesign the site at this time, we do occasionally make small adjustments to improve user experience. Content creation services may be needed to improve aspects of the site in the future.

56. Would a retainer model with hours purchased for the year (to be used per month) be ideal per your note to have 50% of it rolled over to the new year? If yes, could you let us know how many hours you have used previously per month for the service?

We are open to a variety of models, including a retainer model. Please see question 41 above for more details.

57. Could you let us know how old your site is and when it was launched? Also when was the last maintenance that was done on it and would there be any more prior to handover to us as the new agency?

The website was migrated to Drupal 9 in November 2023. Site maintenance is conducted monthly and as needed.

58. Is Pantheon still considered an acceptable option, or is there a specific reason for potentially moving away from it?

Yes, it is still considered an acceptable option.

59. Traffic and Load: What is the current average traffic load on the website, including peak times, and are there any anticipated changes in traffic volume?

As detailed in the RFP and performance metrics under question 7, we are seeking to increase the visibility of the website and continue to attract new visitors, including through organic search. However, large changes in traffic volume are not anticipated. Please see question 45 above for more details on average monthly pageviews.

60. Third-Party Integrations: Can you provide a comprehensive list of all third-party integrations currently used on the website?

Please see question 51 above.

61. WCAG Compliance: Are there specific tools or methodologies you prefer for maintaining and testing WCAG 2.2 AA web accessibility compliance?

No.

62. Update Procedures: Could you elaborate on the process for verifying updates and security patches before deployment?

In line with best practice, updates and security patches should be tested prior to production release.

63. Monitoring Tools: What specific monitoring and threat protection systems are currently in place or preferred?

Security monitoring is currently through our hosting service.

64. Incident Response: Can you provide more details on your existing incident response protocols and any recent incidents to understand the types of challenges faced?

Vendors should recommend incident response protocols as part of their proposal. We have not had any recent incidents.

65. Support Hours: Do you prefer specific hours or time zones for regular and emergency support?

Please refer to question 52 above.

66. Monthly Reports: What specific performance metrics and activities do you expect to be included in the monthly reports?

Please refer to question 7 above.

67. Access Permissions: How often do you anticipate reviewing and updating website access permissions and other security logs?

We anticipate reviewing and updating access permissions and other security logs on an as needed basis.

68. Do you have a list (backlog) of enhancements and improvements you want to make to the site? If so, could you share them?

No, we do not.

69. Do you have a preference to contract directly with a hosting provider or do you want your maintenance provider to subcontract the hosting?

We prefer the maintenance provider to subcontract.

70. Please clarify your current hosting infrastructure and what technical changes or improvements you need.

Please see question 48 above.

71. Please describe or list your “environmental sustainability commitments” as they pertain to site hosting.

Pact’s environmental sustainability commitments are publicly [available on our website](#), along with our Environment and Social Sustainability Policy. Our actions have included, for example, moving away from physical servers.

72. Do you have a preference for dedicated hardware, virtual machines, or containers? Are any of them acceptable?

We do not have a preference. Vendor should consider their selection in relation to the overall competitiveness of the proposal given the evaluation criteria.

73. What type of reporting on the health / security of the infrastructure do you require?

During monthly reporting, Vendors should outline activities performed, including those related to the health/security of the infrastructure. Security incidents should be reported following the guidance in the RFP Section II C, General Requirements.

74. Can you please clarify and describe what you mean by “full access permissions to the hosting environment?”

A member of Pact’s IT team should have access to the hosting environment in the event that urgent action is needed and Vendor is unavailable. Please see question 47 for related information.

75. Is environmental sustainability the only reason why you want to move away from Pantheon?

We are not suggesting a move from Pantheon. Each offeror should provide your suggested approach for evaluation.

76. Do you have any security concerns with Pantheon or have security requirements that must be met with your new hosting provider?

No, there are no security concerns with Pantheon. Please refer to question 9 above for requirements.

77. Can you detail the types of issues that would be considered emergencies and require immediate attention?

Examples of emergencies include but are not limited to the website being inaccessible/unresponsive, a security breach, and website imagery no longer appears.

78. How do you currently handle emergency support, and are there any improvements you are looking for in this area?

We currently have emergency support with a dedicated email for requests. No, we are not looking for any specific improvements in this area.

79. Are there any planned future CX enhancements or new features you anticipate needing support for?

We are not looking to make any enhancements at this time.

80. How do you prioritize and plan for future development and upgrades?

We plan on an annual basis according to our fiscal year, which begins on October 1. We plan and prioritize as an Integrated Communications team and then jointly with our vendor before deciding on the final plan.

81. Are there any emerging technologies or trends you are interested in exploring?

Not at this time.

82. What is the current process for content updates? How frequently are updates typically required?

For adding new content items, such as new articles, and minor site edits, Pact's Integrated Communications team handles this on its own. For larger updates and site changes, the current process includes an initial request and discussion, if needed, with the website vendor, followed by design review (if needed), review in a testing environment (if needed) and deployment.

83. Are there any planned major website changes or redesigns during the 5-year contract period?

There are none at this time.

84. Are there any specific reporting tools or dashboards you'd like us to implement for monitoring website performance and security?

We used Google Analytics for measuring performance and would like to continue utilizing this tool. There are no other preferences at this time.

85. Do you have any preferences for the methodology of rolling over unused support hours?

No.

86. Are there any specific certifications or qualifications you're looking for in the team that will be managing your website?

We are looking for qualifications and experience that demonstrates the team can deliver on the Scope of Work as outlined in the RFP. We do not have any specific requirements or expectations for certifications.

87. Can you provide more details about your expectations for SEO optimization as part of the maintenance work?

Please see question 13 above.

88. How many content types do you have?

18

89. Do you have any custom modules?

Yes.

90. What tools do you use to send email newsletters?

MailerLite.

91. Does the content for the newsletter get sourced from your Drupal website?

Yes.

92. What version control software do you?

We do not have the specifics of the version control software utilized by our current vendor.

93. What tools/processes do you have in place for continuous integration?

These tools/processes are held by our current vendor, not Pact.

94. Are you looking to continue using AddSearch for the search on the website?

We would like to continue with a site search solution, but it does not have to be AddSearch.

95. Are there any specific compliance requirements related to data sovereignty or regional regulations?

No.

96. How many Pact staff members will require full access permissions to the hosting environment?

One.

97. Are there any specific roles or access levels that need to be defined for these staff members?

No.

98. What is the anticipated scope and timeline for migrating Pact's website from Pantheon to a new cloud host?

Please refer to question 28 above.

99. Can you provide more details on the specific types of monitoring and threat protection systems you require?

Please see question 63. We aim to monitor for and protect against phishing, malware and other common web threats.

100. Is there a preferred vendor or type of SSL (TLS) certificate you would like to use, or should the vendor choose one?

No, there is not a preferred vendor or type.

101. Could you provide more details on the types of routine maintenance activities expected during the ongoing maintenance period?

Please see RFP Section II C for details on routine maintenance activities.

102. What are the average number of maintenance tickets per month?

Less than five.

103. What is the other kind of work we can expect during the maintenance?

Please see RFP Section II C for details regarding activities that fall under website maintenance.

104. Are there any known issues that we need to be aware of during the maintenance of the website?

No.

105. How frequently do you expect updates and patches to be applied (e.g., monthly, quarterly)?

Monthly and as needed for urgent fixes.

106. Can you specify the testing process and criteria for approving updates on the test servers before production release?

Upgrades must be deployed to a test server prior to release to ensure it does not cause problems prior to deployment to the live site. Once tested, if no problems are detected, it can be released.

107. What is the expected response time for notifications of performance and security issues?

Vendor should notify Pact with undue delay after becoming aware of any security incident. Vendor's application should include a plan that references incident response and recovery protocols per Section II C of the RFP.

108. Are there any specific tools or systems you prefer for performance and security monitoring?

We use Google Analytics for website performance monitoring.

109. Are there any specific licensing requirements for the software or third-party integrations?

There may be for AddSearch; however, Vendor is not required to continue with this specific product as long as a site search solution is utilized.

110. Are there any tools or metrics you prefer for tracking and maintaining WCAG compliance?

No, there is no preference.

111. Is there a minimum threshold of support hours that must be available at all times?

No there is no minimum that must be available at all times.

112. Would Pact provide the SSL (TLS) certificate or vendor has to procure and renew the certificate?

The Vendor is required to procure and renew the certificate.

113. Is Pact planning for complete UI revamp of the current website?

No.

114. What is the tech stack of the current website?

Please see question 23 above.

115. Is Pact looking to change the tech stack of the current website?

Not necessarily.

116. What is the hosting configuration of the current website? Based on the traffic which Pact is experiencing now, is that configuration is sufficient or looking to enhance the configuration?

Please see questions 48 and 49 above. The current configuration is sufficient.

117. What is the current status of WCAG standard of the website?

Pact's website is currently semi-compliant.

118. Related to user support, please provide the following information: What is the volume of the support requests raised in last 2 years? How many content update or modification requests are raised in last 2 years? How many imagery requests are raised in last 2 years? How many template creation requests are raised in last 2 years?

The website was upgraded to Drupal 9 in November 2023, so the volume of all requests has been greater over the past 1.5 years than in normal times.

119. Is there any cap to roll over the 50% of hours to next month for no. of months?

No.

120. Related to General Requirements, please provide the following information: What is the expected support hours for non-emergency requests from Monday to Friday?

Per RFP Section II, the Vendor should specify regular support hours in their proposed plan.

121. As Vendor has to respond within 24 hours of receiving a request, does these 24 hours is a clock hours or the working hours?

Clock hours

122. What is the count of emergency issues received by Pact for the last 3 years? Please share the year wise information and inputs related to the months when the peak issues are raised.

Pact has had less than five emergency issues in the last three years.

123. Any specific SLA is Pact is looking vendor to adhere to?

No.

124. Can you explain the Geographical Data Center Location a bit more? Can you list the preferred geographical locations for your data center and the reasons behind these preferences?

Pact prefers cloud hosting to support our environmental sustainability commitments. However, if a Vendor proposes a data center, we reserve the right to choose the location of the data center based on a number of factors, including U.S. government guidelines/regulations.

125. Are there any specific access control or permission management features you would like to enhance for designated Pact staff?

No.

126. Are there any particular security enhancements or protocols that you wish to see in place that are not currently implemented?

No.

127. Are there any additional performance monitoring metrics you would like to use that are not part of the current setup?

Please see question 7 above for details on performance metrics.

128. Are there any new third-party integrations or updates to existing integrations that you are planning to implement in the near future?

No.

129. What additional information or metrics would you like to see included in the monthly reports that are currently not provided?

Please see question 7 above for details on performance metrics and RFP Section II C for general requirements on reporting.

130. Is there a new push for ADA compliance?

No.

131. Is Pact looking to maintain the current support level or increase the current support level or potentially decrease the current level of support?

Pact is interested in evaluating each Vendor's plan for support that achieves the desired outcomes.

132. Are there any new SEO strategies or visibility improvement techniques you are planning to implement on the website? Will there be content support for developing new landing pages or blogs to support these efforts?

No.