Request for Proposal for Website Design & Development

Release Date: March 7, 2024

About LakewoodAlive

LakewoodAlive is a community-centered nonprofit organization in Lakewood, Ohio. We seek to foster and sustain vibrant and welcoming neighborhoods in our community through the administration of housing programs that seek to ensure all residents live in healthy and safe housing, hosting large scale community events, and supporting small businesses by connecting them to resources and one another.

Project Overview

We have received a grant to update our website both generally, and with the specific goal of assisting in the intake of residents and small businesses for a variety of support programming. The programming includes submission of standard forms and financial information.

Our organization and website serve a variety of audiences, from attendees of a costumed dog parade to residents on the verge of losing their home and in desperate need of assistance. Our team is small, and each employee wears a variety of hats so ease of use, dependability and support are key elements to success.

Current Situation

Our current website is WordPress last updated in 2017. It was created quickly and affordably through a "Give Camp" event. We believe our website is visually outdated, that information can be difficult to find and is not strategically organized, making it cumbersome for individuals to find what they need. It's also challenging to update content in the backend CMS. We are a small team and efficient web updates are critical. Our community members and business owners, who are our main recipients of services, need to be able to access information related to programs and services, events, eligibility requirements, and resource libraries easily and quickly. In addition, volunteers and event attendees need to be able to find and connect with us.

While our existing site is WordPress, we are open to other CMS solutions that are secure, stable, reasonably priced for licensing, and do not require coding knowledge to make basic content updates.

Primary Project Goals

Our desired outcomes for the new site include:
- An **increase in the number of recipients of our services** (and services delivered in collaboration with other organizations including the City of

Lakewood), primarily community members and small business owners, especially among those most in need

- **Increased attendance to programs and events**, including educational workshops, fundraisers, and community-wide events
- **More donations** given through the website
- Increased **utilization of passive online resources** (for example, housing educational archival content)
- Improved **understanding of LakewoodAlive's purpose and impact**
- Growth in **number of volunteer inquiries**
- **Saved staff time** otherwise used managing website content

Audiences

The following list encompasses our **broad** audience categories, listed roughly in order of priority as it applies to website utilization.

1. **Program Participants / Event Attendees -** Aligned with our mission to foster vibrant neighborhoods, our neighbors are our primary audience. Our community represents a diverse range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.
   a. Our housing outreach services are designed to serve all Lakewood residents with an emphasis on low to moderate income residents, whereas audiences attending our community events represent a larger and broader cross-section of the community. All our neighbors are seeking connection to each other and their community. They have a need to understand what amenities, events, and services are available to them, as well as easy pathways to utilizing them.
   b. Similar to the needs of Housing program participants, small business owners have a need to understand what support LakewoodAlive can offer them, as well as easy mechanisms to take advantage of those offerings. Unlike Housing program participants, they may be more proactive in seeking solutions and assistance. We help small businesses by promoting them in our newsletters and social media, assisting in signage and other grant work and convening small business groups among other initiatives.
   c. Participants may include broad community-based events, smaller homeownership workshops, or recipients of services, each of which have different needs for support and connection.

2. **Supporters -** LakewoodAlive receives support from individuals, corporate funders, and sponsors, as well as grant-making organizations, and volunteers. They have a need to understand how their support, either financial or through

a donation of time, will make a difference in the community. There are many forces vying for the attention of supporters and volunteers, so they also need to understand how critically we need their support and be able to act quickly when they are motivated to do so.

Functional Requirements

Below is a list of features and functionality we envision this new site encompassing, in addition to any recommendations from our web design partner based on their expertise and inventory of our site against our articulated needs.

Broad requirements:
- Improved content structure and design aesthetic
- Built-in web accessibility (WCAG Level 2.2 AA standard preferred)
- Mobile responsiveness/ Mobile-first design
- Reliable and security hosting and data backups
- Access to user analytics
- Stable and easy to use Content Management System

Specific features, content areas, and functionality:
1. Events + Programs:
   - Events calendar
     - Ability to filter or show by categories
     - Ability to link to related resources (PDFs or videos) on event detail pages
     - Ability to list event sponsor logos on event detail pages
     - Actual registration would take place through Eventbrite or RunSignUp
   - Program descriptions
     - Ability to contact LakewoodAlive staff, or submit an inquiry form directly on program pages

2. About info:
   - Mission/ Vision
   - Impact stories + statistics
   - Staff and Board

3. Volunteer opportunities:
   - both listings and ability to field an inquiry

4. Media:
   - Searchable video gallery

- Ability to embed photos and videos
- Searchable resource library (PDFs and links)
- Searchable news articles + press releases

5. General features:
   - Email sign-up pop-up
   - Google translate integration
   - Visually impaired accessibility
   - Ability to create custom forms for basic intake information. We currently use Google Forms, which is a potential work-around if this significantly increases the cost

Nice to have features:
- Ability to create new pages on our own, for special events, limited-scope projects, or campaigns
- Potential integration with document management software. We currently do not use anything, but are looking for solutions to simplify intake processes involving sensitive documents
- Built-in basic SEO capabilities in the CMS

In addition, LakewoodAlive utilizes the following third-party tools, and would like to continue using them with the new site. Integrations or embedded content are ideal where possible.

- DonorPerfect - Ideally, we would like to embed a donation form directly on the site, thereby eliminating the need for PayPal as our primary donation mechanism
- Eventbrite or a similar e-ticketing website
- PayPal - pending capabilities with DonorPerfect, we may not have a need to continue using PayPal as a payment gateway.

Proposal Requirements

The project will be awarded to the firm that demonstrates the greatest capabilities based on the following set of criteria:

- Design approach and process
- Technical capabilities and expertise - experience with nonprofits a plus
- Quality of portfolio
- Quality and clarity of proposal in response to this RFP
- Responsiveness throughout the bidding process

- Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. **We encourage proposals from MBE, WBE, and firms based in northeast Ohio**
- Quality of post-launch support
- Value versus cost for services

Agency Background and Process

Proposals should include the following (not necessarily in this order):

Background and Process
Please provide a background of your firm as well as your web design/development processes. Include the following details (not necessarily in this order):

- How long has your agency been in business?
- What's your agency's experience working with nonprofit clients?
- What's your agency's web design + development experience?
- Please provide bios of your leadership, design, and development team members. Who might be working on the project?
- What is your website design and development process?
- Why do you think you are the best agency for this project?
- What makes your agency different from your competitors?

Functional Requirements
Describe how your firm will address the functional requirements outlined above.

Cost
Outline the design and build costs, licensing fees, and hosting expenses associated with the project. Also include your firm's plan and policies for post-launch maintenance, support and upgrades including hourly rates for services. Lastly, please include your typical payment terms.

Schedule
Provide an estimated timeline for the project including client review and approval milestones.

Work Samples
Include examples of websites your firm has created for other similar mission-driven, nonprofit organizations.

References

Include a minimum of three references. Please include a contact name, telephone number, email address, and the length of your relationship.

Submission Format and Instructions

- Proposals must be received by **5:00 pm ET on March 28, 2024**
- Interested firms should submit proposals in **PDF format** via email to:

  > Ava Olic
  > aolic@lakewoodalive.org
  > Subject Line: Attn: Proposal for Website Design & Development

- Questions may be emailed to **aolic@lakewoodalive.org**

Proposed Budget

Through grant funds and other resources, LakewoodAlive has allocated $12,000 - $15,000 for this project, separate of ongoing maintenance and associated costs.

Review and Selection Timeline

All proposals submitted by the due date will be evaluated.

RFP Timeline:
RFP Issued: 3/7/24
Responses Due: 3/28/24
Finalists Selected & Contacted: 4/18/24
Finalist Interviews: Week of 4/22/24
Winner Selected & Contacted: 4/26/24
Project Kick-off: 5/7/24
Website Launch Target Date: 1/1/25