

## **Berkshire Benchmarks Website RFP – Questions and Answers – 9/16/2021**

Q. Can we use a CMS other than WordPress?

A. While we are encouraging the use of WordPress since our staff already know it, we are open to other CMS's, as long as it meets the requirements spelled out in the RFP (easy to use, we own it, customize anything that is needed, etc.).

Q. Can you provide more detail on the technical details of the data clearinghouse?

A. On the current website, the data clearinghouse is a custom database in Expression Engine. Using EE has proven to be a challenge to work with overtime. On the new website, developers have two options. The first is to develop a database that allows staff to upload data from an excel or csv file into approximately eight fields and have that database be searchable via a web interface for the public. The current Berkshire Benchmarks website has this capability and can be used as an example ([www.berkshirebenchmarks.org](http://www.berkshirebenchmarks.org)). The second option is to utilize Tableau as the data clearinghouse; however, the developer is asked to assist in setting up the Tableau interface.

Regardless of the option that is chosen, the importation of the existing data (available in Excel) is encouraged. We also encourage the importation/linkage to existing public datasets, such as the US Census Bureau.

Q. What are the current database challenges?

A. There are several challenges. On the backend, it is difficult to find a previous record to update it, which happens on occasion. The import from excel, via csv, is a bit clunky and often has issues. On the front end, we have no ability to change the appearance of the data and graphs. The graph often gets cut off and the interface for finding data often confuses people.

Q. I understand you want to start with an empty database and then import the existing data. Is this a relational database with multiple tables and keys/relations? If so, would you need us to audit the existing design and suggest improvements?

A. The existing database is a relational database, but very primitive. The only relation is in geography and topic name, which have specific codes that link to the common name.

Q. We would develop the website using WordPress as the CMS. Is it required that the data clearinghouse be updated through the WordPress backend? Or can we develop a separate space to perform data clearinghouse tasks and the website will query both the WP database and the data clearinghouse?

A. The data clearinghouse can be a separate database or built into WP. As long as the user does not see a transition and it maintains a consistent look and feel with the rest of the website.

Q. You wrote, "We also encourage the importation/linkage to existing public datasets, such as the US Census Bureau". Can you tell us technically what that means?

A. Many of our data sources publish their data online (Census Bureau, Mass Department of Education, Mass Department of Unemployment, etc.). Currently, we must download their data, manually clean it up to meet the requirements of the current website, and then upload it to the new website.

Automating this process to automatically process the data and format it for the new database would save us time. We continually expand the data we collect, so if the vendor includes the importation of data into the new database, it needs to be customizable on our end.

Q. Which Tableau license do you have?

A. We currently have an Tableau Online license.

Q. Does your license allow the display of data publicly (without sign-in)? We're new to this, and so we're reading [this page about embedding views](#).

A. Tableau Online does not allow direct access to the public, so our workbooks will be shared through Tableau Public, which can then be embedded into the website.

Q. Does your team have enough experience with Tableau to move forward, or will you need us to train you to create dashboards, import data, and so on?

A. We have basic knowledge of Tableau and do not need the vendor to train us on it. If a vendor has experience with Tableau and would like to offer suggestions to workflow, that would be appreciated, but not required.

Q. Does your RFP assume the developer will be using JS or an iFrame to display Tableau data on the website? Or do you require the developer to understand and use the REST API to make data requests?

A. We assume the developer will be using JS or an iFrame to embed the Tableau pages into the website. We do not require the developer to utilize REST API to make data requests unless this is something the developer proposes.

Q. Can you provide the current website URL?

A. <http://www.berkshirebenchmarks.org/>

Q. Can you share any budgetary information about this project with us, is there any assigned budget for this project? Please specified the budget.

A. Our maximum budget is \$75,000.

Q. Is there an incumbent company or organization with an advantage for this project?

A. There is no incumbent company with an advantage for this project

Q. Would the project need any kind of integration service? Can you provide the list of systems or any other nature of integration you might need?

A. The only integration that is needed is with Tableau.

Q. Are there any 3rd party API integrations or any system integration that we should be aware of while scoping the solution?

A. As mentioned above, the only integration that is needed is with Tableau.

Q. Approximately how many pages/assets of content are to be migrated? What format can/will the content be provided?

A. No pages will be migrated. BRPC will provide new content. For the Data Clearinghouse, we encourage the vendor to migrate the existing data (around 100,000 records) to the new data clearinghouse. This can be directly through the current website, or through an excel file that we can provide. Textual content will be provided in Word. Data for the Data Clearinghouse can be provided in Excel.

Q. Are there any multilingual requirements beyond using Google Translate or similar?

A. There are no multilingual requirements beyond Google Translate.

Q. How many templates does the City wants us to design?

A. BRPC is looking for three conceptual designs for the home page., which will then be refined. In addition to this, there will be around 5 unique page designs, all using a similar graphic feel, but different functionality.

Q. Do you expect vendor to create content for the websites?

A. No – BRPC will create the content. We do ask the vendor to choose photos from public source data.

Q. What is the expected duration of the project?

A. We hope to begin around November 1 and have the site live around April 1, 2022.

Q. Has a Q&A or an addenda been released yet?

A. Not yet. An initial Q&A will be released this afternoon. A second version will be released around September 27<sup>th</sup>.

Q. Is there a mandatory pre-proposal meeting?

A. No

Q. Is the due date still the same?

A. Yes, the due date is still October 12, 2021

Q. Do you have a style guide or a brand guide?

A. The last page of the RFP (page 14) has the brand guide for Berkshire Benchmarks.

Q. Do you have a budget you are able to share? Does the budget include tech support and hosting? What was the investment in the previous website?

A. The maximum budget for the website design/development is \$75,000. This does not include hosting and technical support, which are an additional cost.

Q. Does the Commission have a CMS preference? Open source? Drupal/WordPress?

A. Our preference is WordPress, but we are open to other options.

Q. Who are your primary and secondary users?

A. Our primary users are community organizations and municipalities in Berkshire County. Our secondary users would be general residents of the county.

Q. Would you like detailed research in terms of your audience in the form of an audience needs assessment?

A. We do not need an audience needs assessment.

Q. Do you have a desired launch date? Is there a specific event driving the launch date?

A. Our desired launch date is April 1, 2022. This is somewhat flexible, but we are planning an event to reveal the website and do over the indicators with the larger community.

Q. What is the current hosting environment?

A. Berkshire Benchmarks is currently hosted by Nexcess.

Q. How many visitors does the current website receive on a monthly basis?

A. Approximately 200 users/month

Q. How many pages of content do you anticipate transferring to the new site?

A. All pages will have new content developed by BRPC.

Q. What are your current pain points with the existing website?

A. Current pain points is the inability to change design, edit layout, difficulty changing text and content, and challenges working with the existing data clearinghouse.

Q. What are the current technical challenges (if any)?

A. For the existing website, the biggest technical challenge is the CMS (Expression Engine), which does not allow us much of an ability to change anything. For the new website, the two technical challenges the vendor will need to be able to address is the integration with Tableau, and the development of the data clearinghouse.

Q. How many site administrators will you have?

A. One

Q. Will you require different levels of admin permissions?

A. We may need two levels – one with full admin privileges and another with content only privileges.

Q. Do you expect copywriting or editing services as part of engagement?

A. No

Q. What is the expected budget for this project?

A. A maximum of \$75,000

Q. Is there a preference for in-state bidders?

A. There is no preference for in-state bidders.

Q. Is there any requirement for the vendor to be on site?

A. There is no requirement for the vendor to be onsite.

Q. Can responses be submitted via email?

A. No. Per Massachusetts procurement law, responses must be mailed.

Q. Do you have a design concept ready, or is that expected to be part of the vendor's offering?

A. We do not have a design concept ready. The vendor is expected to present three home page designs. The team will then work with the vendor to refine one of them.

Q. Do you have an idea (rough number) of how many pages are going to be developed as part of this proposal?

A. A minimum of 14 pages will be developed per the scope of work.

Q. Is your team providing website content?

A. BRPC will be providing the content.

Q. How many pages will be migrated to the new site, if any?

A. No pages need to be migrated, however the data within the Data Clearinghouse needs to be migrated (directly from the existing website or from excel tables BRPC currently has).

Q. Migration of website hosting: Will full FTP access be provided to current hosting accounts?

A. Access will be given to the existing website; however, I do not know if it will be full FTP access.

Q. If it is okay, would you let us know your current hosting provider (makes it easier to gauge work involved as we have migrated a number of websites from big name hosting companies)

A. Nexcess

Q. Why are you open to Migrating hosts?

A. We are not locked in on any specific host.

Q. How much are you currently paying to host?

A. The cost is currently being covered by the former developer.