

Request for Proposals

Johnston County Government Website Redesign and Development



Request for Proposals Due by:

October 27, 2025

3:00 pm

SUBMIT TO:

**Pam Radford, Purchasing Supervisor
PO Box 1049 (Mailing Address)
207 E. Johnston St., B-207 (Physical Address)
Smithfield, NC 27577**

Email Questions:

**Pam Radford, Purchasing Supervisor: pamela.radford@johnstonnc.gov
no later than October 13, 2025 at 3:00 pm**

RFP Information at a Glance

Johnston County Contact Person	Pam Radford, Purchasing Supervisor
How to Obtain the RFP Documents	1. https://www.johnstonnc.gov/finance 2. Email Request to Purchasing: pamela.radford@johnstonnc.gov
How to Fully Respond to this RFP	Submit 1 original, 3 copies and 1 electronic copy (USB drive) of the proposal to the Johnston County Finance Department. Mail or Deliver in a sealed envelope identified <i>“Proposal enclosed #2025-05-“Website redesign” and your firm name on the outside</i> <i>Faxes or Email submissions are not accepted</i>
Date Issued	September 25, 2025
Q & A Deadline	October 13, 2025, by 3:00 pm to pamela.radford@johnstonnc.gov
RFP Submittal Due Date	October 27, 2025 at 3:00pm Pam Radford, Purchasing Supervisor PO Box 1049 (Mailing Address) 207 E. Johnston St., B-207 (Physical Address) Smithfield, NC 27577

Johnston County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received or to select the proposal which, in our opinion, is in the best overall interest of the County.

1. Introduction

Johnston County Government is soliciting proposals from qualified vendors for the redesign of its official website, www.johnstonnc.gov. The goal of this project is to achieve a visually modern, highly usable, and federally compliant website. The County maintains its own internal web development and server infrastructure; therefore, hosting and backend development services are not required. This RFP is limited to layout, styling, and user interface development.

The selected vendor will work in close collaboration with the County's in-house web team to design and implement the updated site, with full ADA compliance targeted for completion by April, 2026.

Request for Proposals must be received by 3:00 p.m. EST on Monday, October 27, 2025. Submissions received after this deadline, regardless of reason, will not be considered.

Request for Proposals must be clearly marked "RFP – Website Redesign and Development" and delivered to:

Attn: Pam Radford, Purchasing Supervisor

Johnston County

Physical Address:

Johnston County Courthouse
207 E. Johnston Street, B-207
Smithfield, NC 27577

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 1049
Smithfield, NC 27577

All submissions must be sealed and include:

- One (1) original
- Three (3) hard copies
- One (1) electronic copy (USB; email submissions are not accepted)

Each submission should not exceed 40 pages, and fonts must be no smaller than Times New Roman, size 11.

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted via email to pamela.radford@johnstonnc.gov no later than 3:00 p.m. EST on October 13, 2025. Clarifications and addenda will be distributed by email to all known proposers. Questions and responses are for informational purposes only and do not alter the RFP unless formally amended.

2. Project Goals

- **Develop a clean, responsive, and accessible design:**
Create a modern interface that automatically adjusts to various screen sizes including smartphones, tablets, and desktop monitors. The design must comply with the latest usability standards and be easy to navigate on any device. The new site should fully reflect Johnston County's recently updated brand identity, including its color palette, typography, logo usage, and overall tone to ensure visual consistency across all digital platforms.
- **Collaborate with key stakeholders:**
Partner closely with the County's Public Information Office and internal web development team to ensure the new design aligns with technical requirements and can be successfully integrated with existing systems and backend infrastructure.
- **Support content analysis and migration:**
Evaluate current web content to identify what is outdated, redundant, or underutilized. Assist with the organization and prioritization of relevant materials to improve user experience and streamline navigation.
- **Provide scalable components and templates:**
Deliver flexible design elements, such as reusable page templates, navigation structures, and content modules that allow for easy updates and adaptations over time, reducing the need for custom development with every change.
- **Offer user-friendly CMS options:**
Recommend and support the integration of a content management system (CMS) that enables non-technical County staff to easily update content, manage media, and add new pages while maintaining design integrity.
- **Ensure compliance with accessibility standards:**
Adhere to the WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility guidelines and proactively address pending federal updates expected by April 2026. The site must be inclusive to users with disabilities and meet legal accessibility requirements.

3. Scope of Work

The selected vendor will:

- **Conduct a design discovery phase:**
Facilitate workshops or meetings with Johnston County's web team and key stakeholders to gather requirements, identify key audiences, and define visual and functional expectations.
- **Create device-optimized wireframes and mockups:**
Develop detailed storyboards and mockups that illustrate how the design will appear across desktop, tablet, and mobile devices. These designs should demonstrate usability and accommodate various content types.

- **Develop intuitive, full-width layouts:**
Avoid outdated side navigation in favor of modern, easy-to-navigate, full-width layouts that prioritize content hierarchy and user engagement.
- **Design key templates and layouts including:**
 - **Main homepage:** Incorporating quick links, announcements, and search accessibility.
 - **Department landing pages:** Tailored to department-specific needs, based on user behavior data and traffic analytics.
 - **Standard content pages:** Including flexible formats for single-column, two-column, or hybrid content.
 - **Calendar, news, and event sections:** With visually engaging formats for dynamic, frequently updated content.
 - **Prominent search bar:** Positioned for easy access on every page.
 - **Space for AI/chatbot integration:** Future-proofing the layout for smart digital assistant capabilities.
 - **Image and graphic banners:** Rotating or static, depending on page type and communication needs.
 - **Performance scalability:** Ensuring the site can handle increased traffic during emergencies or high-profile announcements.
- **Address the following features:**
 - **Language translation tools** to improve access for non-English speakers.
 - **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sections** to reduce user inquiries.
 - **Multimedia accessibility support** for video/audio with captions, transcripts, and screen reader compatibility.
 - **Integration space for HotJar or similar analytics tools** and AI-driven chat features.
 - **Accessibility support tools** like UserWay or AccessiBe to assist users with visual, auditory, or mobility challenges.
 - **Designated areas for high-visibility content** such as emergency alerts, public notices, certifications, and awards.
- **Provide front-end development assets:**
Deliver well-documented, high-performance HTML, CSS, and JavaScript files optimized for accessibility, mobile responsiveness, search engine visibility, and security.
- **Collaborate on implementation and testing:**
Work closely with the County's web team to install the new design on a staging server, conduct thorough testing across browsers and devices, and resolve any issues prior to launch.
- **Deliver design source files and documentation:**
Provide layered, editable design files (e.g., PSD, AI, or Sketch) along with complete design documentation to support future maintenance and updates.

4. Accessibility Requirements

The selected vendor must demonstrate a strong commitment to digital accessibility throughout the design and development process. Accessibility is a core requirement for this project, and the new website must be inclusive, user-friendly, and compliant with current and upcoming federal guidelines.

The vendor is required to:

- **Meet WCAG 2.1 AA and Section 508 Compliance Standards:**
Ensure all pages, navigation elements, forms, media, and interactive components meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA and adhere to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. This includes proper semantic HTML structure, color contrast compliance, screen reader compatibility, keyboard navigability, and error prevention in form fields.
- **Prepare for 2026 Federal Digital Accessibility Requirements:**
Stay informed and proactively design with the upcoming April 2026 federal digital accessibility standards in mind. The County expects the vendor to anticipate and accommodate evolving legal and regulatory expectations in order to maintain long-term compliance.
- **Coordinate with a third-party ADA compliance audit and certification partner:**
Collaborate with an independent firm (to be selected and retained by Johnston County) that will perform a full audit of the website for accessibility certification. The vendor will be expected to respond to audit feedback, resolve flagged issues, and resubmit elements for verification as needed.
- **Deliver audit-ready code and layouts:**
Provide clean, well-documented code and accessible design structures that streamline the third-party auditing and certification process. This includes the use of ARIA labels, text alternatives for non-text content, focus indicators, and other compliance-ready features.

Optional (Separately Priced) Accessibility Services:

Vendors are encouraged to outline their availability, approach, and pricing for the following specialized services. These services must be listed as separate line items from the core redesign proposal.

- **Certified Code Audits by an IAAP Expert:**
Offer optional line-by-line code review and accessibility verification by a certified professional with credentials from the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP).
- **Audit Support Services:**
Provide assistance throughout the third-party auditing process, including collaborative review sessions, technical remediation support, and documentation preparation.
- **Application and Certification Assistance:**
Support Johnston County in preparing and submitting materials for formal

accessibility certification. This includes managing documentation, addressing technical comments, and advising on submission strategy.

Note:

The cost estimates for these optional accessibility services must be clearly itemized and submitted separately from the main website redesign cost proposal. Failure to do so may result in disqualification or incomplete evaluation of the proposal.

5. IT Security Requirements:

The redesigned website must conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at a minimum Level AA to ensure accessibility for all users, including those with disabilities. If the project involves extensive custom coding or application development, the vendor must follow OWASP best practices to ensure secure coding and protect against common web vulnerabilities.

6. Projected Project Timeline

- RFP Issued: September 25, 2025
 - Questions Due: October 13, 2025
 - Proposal Deadline: October 27, 2025 (2 weeks after Questions Due)
 - Award Notification: November 17, 2025
 - Design Completion Target: 1st quarter 2026
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7. Proposal Submission Requirements

Vendors must submit a complete and detailed proposal that clearly addresses all project requirements. Incomplete or vague submissions may be disqualified from consideration. Each proposal should be well-organized, professionally presented, and include the following:

- **Cover Letter and Introduction:**
A signed letter on company letterhead introducing the firm, outlining your interest in the project, and confirming your understanding of the scope, timeline, and expectations. The letter should also identify the primary point of contact for the proposal and include their full contact information.
- **Firm Profile and Relevant Experience:**
A brief background of your company, including history, size, areas of specialization, and team structure. Clearly describe your experience designing and developing websites for government agencies or other public-sector entities, with emphasis on compliance, transparency, and usability.
- **Examples of Similar Public-Sector Redesigns:**
Provide a minimum of three (3) completed projects that demonstrate your expertise

in redesigning websites for counties, municipalities, or other public entities. Each example should include:

- A brief project summary
 - Screenshots or URLs
 - Scope of work performed
 - Results achieved (e.g., improved accessibility, traffic increases, user satisfaction)
- **Project Approach and Methodology:**

Outline your proposed process for completing the project, from discovery to launch. Include:

 - Project phases and deliverables
 - Stakeholder engagement strategy
 - Communication and project management tools (e.g., Asana, Trello, Basecamp)
 - Feedback and revision process
 - Quality assurance and testing practices
- **Accessibility Strategy and Tools Utilized:**

Describe your team's approach to ensuring WCAG 2.1 AA and Section 508 compliance, as well as preparations for upcoming 2026 accessibility standards. Identify the specific tools, technologies, and testing methods (manual and automated) you use to verify accessibility compliance.
- **Project Timeline with Key Milestones:**

Include a realistic timeline that outlines key phases, milestones, and deliverables—starting from contract award to design completion. Indicate your capacity to meet the County's target completion date of 1st quarter 2026.
- **Itemized Cost Proposal:**

Provide a detailed cost breakdown by project phase, service, and deliverable. Include separate line items for:

 - Design and development
 - Content migration support
 - CMS setup and training (if applicable)
 - Accessibility services (if offered)
 - Ongoing support or maintenance options (if offered)
- **Three (3) Professional References:**

Provide references from three clients for whom you've completed similar projects, preferably in the public sector. Each reference should include:

 - Name and title
 - Organization
 - Contact information
 - Project description and your role

Submission Instructions:

All proposals must be submitted by the deadline listed in the RFP timeline.

Submit proposals to:

Pam Radford
Johnston County Government
PO Box 1049 (Mailing Address)
207 E. Johnston St., B-207 (Physical Address)
Smithfield, NC 27577

Subject Line: *Website Redesign RFP Submission*

Late submissions may not be considered. Email submissions are not accepted.

8. Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed and scored by an evaluation team using the following criteria:

- **Experience with Government Website Projects (20%)**
Proven success in designing and implementing websites for counties, municipalities, or other public agencies, particularly those involving regulatory, accessibility, and usability requirements.
- **Understanding of Project Goals and Requirements (20%)**
Demonstrated comprehension of the scope, purpose, user needs, branding integration, and accessibility goals as outlined in this RFP.
- **ADA/Accessibility Expertise (15%)**
Depth of knowledge and demonstrated practice in developing accessible websites that comply with WCAG 2.1 AA, Section 508, and emerging 2026 standards.
- **Collaboration Capability with In-House Technical Staff (15%)**
Willingness and ability to work alongside the County's internal web team, including collaborative planning, shared implementation, and open communication.
- **Aesthetic Quality and Innovation in Previous Work (10%)**
Visual appeal, ease of navigation, and creative yet functional design elements in past projects, as well as a user-centered design approach.
- **Project Cost and Value (10%)**
Overall value for services rendered. Proposals will be assessed on cost-effectiveness, transparency, and alignment with the County's budget and needs.
- **Ability to Meet Proposed Timeline (10%)**
Capacity to deliver the project within the timeframe specified, including demonstrated resource availability and contingency planning.

End of RFP Document