Web Portal: Request for Information

Request for Information for the University of Virginia regarding availability and approval of suppliers providing Web Portal services.

Open 8/12/2025 4:00 PM EST

Close 09/15/2025 11:59 PM EST

Type Request for Information

Number RFI-UVA-081225

Currency US Dollar

Contacts

Dr. Andrea Roberts

cclevents@virginia.edu

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
Reference: Web Developer

Date: 08/12/2025

Information required by:

<u>Please complete the requested information for review by the University of Virginia.</u>

This is not a bid or proposal. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes and does not constitute a solicitation. Responses will not be returned and do not constitute a binding agreement.

The University of Virginia (the "University") is currently evaluating services to develop a web portal for descendant projects and research. For specific details, refer to Attachment A in the Buyer Attachment Section. Certain items are currently listed in Attachment A, these are primary items that the University is requesting. However, alternate items and additional items are encouraged. To facilitate the University's evaluation of strategies and to foster further diversity in our supply chain, we are interested in obtaining information from suppliers who are capable of providing requested services.

Please review the questions and respond accordingly. Any questions should be directed to Dr Andrea Roberts at cclevents@virginia.edu.

NOTE: This is a Request for Information (RFI) only. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes – it does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP in the future. This request for information does not commit the University to contract for any supply or service whatsoever. Further, the University is not at this time seeking proposals and will not accept unsolicited proposals. Respondees are advised that the University will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP, if any is issued.

Request for Information: Out(sider) Preservation Initiative

Web Portal Developer

Contact: Dr. Andrea Roberts, cclevents@virginia.edu

Submit via Online Form: https://virginia.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_78KItRaDshtLyya

1.0 General Instructions

    1.1 Invitation

The Center for Cultural Landscapes at the University of Virginia School of Architecture invites qualified firms, university partners, and consulting groups to respond to this Request for Information (RFI) for a Portal Developer. This opportunity is part of the Out(sider) Preservation Initiative (OPI), a research-driven effort to design and build a digital portal that supports descendant-led projects, research, and cultural preservation.

    1.2 Deadline

Complete electronic submissions no later than 11:59 EST, September 15, 2025:

        Electronic Submission Form

Responses should clearly indicate the legal name, address and telephone number of the offeror (company, firm, partnership, organization or individual). Any cost information is strictly informational and is not binding. Any work would only be performed according to a written agreement in the future. All Information shall be received by 11:59 EST, September 15, 2025. Any responses received after this time and date will not be considered. It is the sole responsibility of the respondent to ensure that all materials are submitted via the electronic form by the stated deadline.

Questions

1. All inquiries related to this RFI must be submitted in writing via email no later than **August 29** to **cclevents@virginia.edu**, attention **Dr. Andrea Roberts**.
2. Please use the subject line: **"RFI Response – [Your Organization's Name]"**.

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1. Background and Current Operation

The [Out(sider) Preservation Initiative (OPI)](#), housed at the University of Virginia's Center for Cultural Landscapes (CCL), is a research project that reimagines preservation by focusing on the origin stories of Black settlements and towns and the descendants of the founders. Directed by Dr. Andrea Roberts, the initiative centers the knowledge, experiences, and visions of Black descendant communities that have been historically excluded from formal preservation practices.

Building on Dr. Roberts' foundational work with [The Texas Freedom Colonies Project™](#), the initiative seeks to expand the digital presence of descendant communities nationally to support contemporary descendant communities in documenting, preserving, and planning for their places on their own terms. The initiative prioritizes cooperative practice, technical innovation and interdisciplinary approaches that bridge academic research with community-led action.

The initiative has four key components:
1. Provide Grants
2. Create a Portal
3. Develop "Preservation" Pedagogy
4. Produce Events and Communities of Practice

The forthcoming Out(sider) Preservation Initiative web portal will serve as a digital infrastructure for:

- Archiving descendant-led preservation efforts
- Sharing cultural practices
- Mapping diasporic and historical connections
- Providing training tools and resources for communities
- Modeling reflective, ethical engagement and digital stewardship

2. Purpose of the Request for Information

This RFI is intended to:

- Identify qualified developers with experience in community-based digital projects
- Gather insights into technical feasibility and implementation strategies
- Build a shortlist of vendors who will be invited to submit bids.
- To showcase shortlist of vendors at an in-person Out(sider) Preservation Initiative Symposium in Charlottesville, VA, scheduled for February 2026.

This process is part of a collaborative, trust-building approach that prioritizes relationship development and mutual learning as much as technical innovation. We seek firms that embrace iterative development, co-creation, and ethical data stewardship rooted in Black descendant-led cultural preservation.

3. General Questions

1. **Organizational Background**
   a. Describe your company, areas of expertise, and approach to digital development.
   b. What makes your team a strong fit for a community-led initiative like the Out(sider) Preservation Initiative?

2. **Project Examples**
   a. Provide up to **three project examples** that demonstrate your team's work with:
      i. Community engagement
      ii. Culturally responsive design
      iii. Archival systems
      iv. Digital storytelling
   b. For each, note the audience, your client/partners, any technologies used, and the costs and fees associated with the examples you provide.

3. **Collaborative Process**
   a. How does your team approach iterative design with partners who have low computer literacy?
   b. Are you open to participating in a showcase that includes giving presentations to descendant communities?

4. Functional Features and Needs

Please select three (3) categories from the list below and describe your team's approaches and methods for each one you select.

- **Community Archives & Collections:** Host and preserve media, documents, and metadata.
- **Interactive Mapping & Spatial Narratives:** Center dynamic mapping to visualize historical and contemporary place-based connections.
- **Timelines & Digital Storytelling Tools:** Integrate galleries, timelines, and story maps.
- **Search & Discoverability:** Ensure accessible UI/UX and strong SEO.
- **Public & Private Entrances:** Support differentiated access levels (e.g., public-facing, descendant-only).
- **Multilingual & Accessible Design:** Meet ADA compliance, support multilingual interfaces, and use universal design principles.

- **CMS/Platform Recommendations:** Preference for open-source, scalable, sustainable systems, and minimal computing for web browsers. Optional ability to create a phone app as well.
- **Future-Proofing:** Enable long-term data backups, migration, and preservation.
- **Data Sustainability Plan:** Include strategies for digital longevity, redundancy, and content stewardship.
- **Templates for Grantees and Pilot Project:** Photo, video, bio, place biography, leader biography, context/ description of content, spatial tagging, and metatagging.
- **Discussion Forum**: Create a secure, moderated space for users, project leaders, and partners to connect, share updates, and engage in dialogue across projects and regions.

5. Consulting and Support Service

In this section, please provide concrete examples and details about your approach to training and consultation. Include as is relevant general cost ranges for 1-5 years and 5-10 years.

- Describe your initial scoping process.
- What training and support for community-based and non-technical users do you offer?
- How have you supported content migration and onboarding?
- Describe your approach to the long-term maintenance of the project(s).
- Describe how you have designed governance models for community-driven platform oversight.

7. Contact Information

For questions or to submit your response, please contact us at:

Subject Line should say: RFI Response "Name of your company"

ATTN Andrea Roberts
Email: cclevents@virginia.edu

Websites:
- https://www.arch.virginia.edu/ccl
- www.outsiderpreservation.com

Use the electronic form to submit: Electronic Submission Form
Deadline: Monday, September 15, 2025 at 11:59 PM EST