

EASTERN KENTUCKY



CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, INC.

Request for Proposals

for

Website Development

Issued by

**Eastern Kentucky
Concentrated Employment Program, Inc.**

June 27, 2024

I. Description of the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) and Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. Local Workforce Area

The Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) is the workforce development strategy and policy board for the Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. local workforce area, formed and certified under the provisions of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. The Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. local workforce area consists of these 23 counties in far Eastern Kentucky: Bell, Breathitt, Carter, Clay, Elliott, Floyd, Harlan, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Magoffin, Martin, Menifee, Morgan, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Wolfe.

Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. (EKCEP), Inc. is a non-profit corporation that serves as the administrative entity and staff for the Eastern Kentucky WIB, executing the WIB's decisions and pursuing its objectives. However, EKCEP, Inc. does not provide Direct Workforce Services to clients of the workforce system, preferring instead to contract for the delivery of those services. Although Direct Workforce Services are provided through contractors, EKCEP staff and/or partners may provide workshops, seminars, etc. (e.g., soft skills training, computer literacy) that are aimed at actively engaging private industry in ways that support the placement efforts and other Direct Workforce Services provided by its contractors. Once those contracts have been awarded, EKCEP, Inc. interacts administratively with the contractors, providing leadership, guidance, professional development, technical assistance, monitoring, and other activities to ensure that the contractors faithfully execute the strategies and policies of the Eastern Kentucky WIB.

Primary funding for EKCEP, Inc. comes from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, through the Kentucky Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development, under WIOA. EKCEP also provides services funded by grants from a variety of other sources, both public and private.

II. Services Solicited by This Request for Proposals (RFP)

A. Overview

EKCEP, Inc., the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, is seeking proposals from qualified vendors for the design and development of a new, comprehensive website for ekcep.org. The goal of this project is to create a modern, user-friendly website that effectively communicates EKCEP's mission, programs, and services to a wide range of stakeholders.

B. Project Scope and Deliverables

The website design should be modern and visually appealing, reflecting EKCEP's brand identity and incorporating best practices for user experience and accessibility. It must also be mobile responsive, ensuring optimal viewing on various devices. The website should have a clear navigation structure with

easy-to-use menus and intuitive organization of content. Engaging visuals, such as high-quality images, videos, and interactive elements, should be incorporated. Existing content will need to be transferred to the new website, ensuring accuracy and consistency.

For website development, EKCEP requires a user-friendly Content Management System (CMS) that allows staff to easily manage content without technical expertise. The website should also include user management capabilities, a secure document management system, robust search functionality, contact forms, social media integration, and interactive elements like maps, event calendars, and fillable forms. Additionally, a news section is needed for sharing updates and relevant articles.

Optional features that vendors may propose include a platform to accept donations, a job board, and custom web applications tailored to EKCEP's specific needs.

The website should be geared toward a wide and diverse audience, but especially appeal to individuals within the workforce of EKCEP's service area, e.g. individuals who are unemployed or under-employed, youth aged 16-24, and dislocated workers recently laid off from their jobs. The sites should also be effective resources for employers who may need assistance with staffing needs, on-the-job training, or other services.

While the vendor shall be awarded a wide latitude to design and develop optimal websites, EKCEP does reserve the right to direct certain design elements deemed necessary to maintain consistency to the established brand. Those elements can include logos, static or moving imagery, and social media integration among others.

EKCEP.org

The website at <https://www.ekcep.org> should exist as the main online portal for EKCEP, Inc. The work this RFP solicits includes a full redesign of the current website that incorporates engaging and easy-to-use elements meant to inform visitors about the strategic mission of EKCEP and the workforce services available within the agency's 23-county service area.

The new ekcep.org should also provide a full measure of transparency for workforce activities in the region to include the policies and public meeting schedules of the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) and EKCEP Board of Directors.

In addition to an attractive and engaging home page, the new site should also incorporate the following subpages providing overviews and contact information for specific workforce programs operated by EKCEP, Inc.

Kentucky Career Center JobSight: EKCEP operates the Kentucky Career Center JobSight network of workforce centers throughout its 23-county service area. The career centers are located within the facilities of EKCEP's nine Community

Action contractor partners and provide trained staff to assist job seekers and employers with a wide range of workforce services.

This page should inform visitors and provide the location and contact information for each of the career centers in EKCEP's region. It should also include links to third-party websites that partner with EKCEP as required one-stop partners, such as the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Kentucky Career Development Office, etc.

Recovery & Reentry Services: Since 2019, EKCEP has operated programs specifically designed to assist people in recovery from Substance Use Disorder and who are sufficiently prepared to enter or re-enter the workforce with career and employment services.

The subpage covering EKCEP's new Recovery & Reentry Services division will include information about EKCEP's focus on services for people in recovery and the current programs under the EKCEP umbrella that provide those services, including the Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment (SITE), Crisis Stabilization Community Reentry, and Barrier Relief.

Teleworks USA: Teleworks USA is an innovative program that provides services to prospective teleworkers and connects them with remote-work opportunities with a number of partner companies in the digital economy.

The Teleworks USA subpage should provide an overview of the Teleworks USA program and the services it offers to both potential teleworkers and employers. It should include a directory of Teleworks USA career advisors in the service area to help visitors connect with the people behind the program.

History of Concentrated Employment Programs: EKCEP is currently one of only three remaining Concentrated Employment Programs (CEPs) operating in the United States. This subpage will provide a history of CEPs, how they are unique and effective in the delivery of workforce development services, and how EKCEP specifically continues to make a positive impact within the region.

EKCEP Board of Directors: EKCEP is governed by a board of 27 directors from across the 23-county service area. This subpage must include the board's background and bylaws, and a directory of board members with photos. It must also include the minutes from previous board meetings and a schedule of dates for future meetings, as they are available.

Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board: In its role as the workforce development agency for Eastern Kentucky, EKCEP is staff to the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB). The EKWIB is tasked with the oversight and strategic development of workforce services funded by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

This subpage must include the board's bylaws, policies, and other required materials, and a directory of board members with photos. It must also include the minutes from previous board meetings and a schedule of dates for future

meetings, as they are available.

EKCEP Staff: This subpage should include a directory of EKCEP's current staff with email contact information.

Additional subpages should include the following:

- News: Includes news items about EKCEP and other informative articles as needed. This section should also incorporate options for multimedia such as still images, slideshows, video, and other media as deemed necessary.
- Events Calendar: This section should include an interactive calendar of workforce events within EKCEP's service area. The calendar will be updated regularly by EKCEP staff.
- Strategic and Comprehensive Plans: Describes the vision of the EKWIB and EKCEP for the region of Eastern Kentucky and its workforce system.
- Contact: Includes a fillable form where visitors can contact EKCEP directly through a staff email account attached to the form.

The above list may not be exhaustive, and should be considered as a minimum requirement of subpages beyond the site's landing page. If during the course of discovery it becomes apparent that additional page content is necessary, EKCEP reserves the right to request that development as part of this RFP.

SEO and Site Mapping

EKCEP seeks a vendor who understands that SEO isn't just an add-on; it's an integral part of website development. Proposals should demonstrate expertise in developing and implementing SEO strategies that not only drive organic traffic but also align with EKCEP's broader goals and target audience. EKCEP is looking for a partner who can help us achieve a prominent and sustainable presence in search engine results, ultimately leading to increased brand visibility, engagement, and conversions.

In addition to SEO expertise, EKCEP requires a vendor who understands the importance of clear and intuitive site mapping. Your proposal should outline your approach to creating a sitemap that not only enhances user navigation and engagement but also optimizes the website's structure for search engines. EKCEP seeks a partner who can develop a sitemap that aligns with our content strategy and agency goals, ensuring a seamless user journey and maximum visibility in search results.

Mobile Responsiveness

EKCEP requires a vendor who prioritizes mobile responsiveness throughout the entire development process. Your proposal should outline your approach to designing and building a website that not only functions flawlessly on desktops but also delivers an optimal viewing and interaction experience on smartphones and tablets. This includes considerations for touch-based navigation, responsive image scaling, and layout adjustments that ensure content readability and accessibility across all devices. EKCEP will only contract with a vendor who

understands that mobile responsiveness is not an afterthought, but a fundamental design principle that enhances user engagement, increases conversions, and ultimately contributes to the overall success of the website.

Maintenance Contract

EKCEP will prefer to enter into a maintenance contract with the vendor after completion of the website design and development that will cover security and software updates, bug fixes, and minor design changes. Proposal should include consideration of ongoing site maintenance considerations.

Cybersecurity

A comprehensive cybersecurity strategy is essential to mitigate risks, safeguard against potential breaches, facilitate recovery in the event of an incident, and establish trust with users. Any proposal must include such a strategy as part of the initial project design and any ongoing maintenance agreement.

Staff Training

The vendor awarded a contract from this RFP should provide any relevant training and documents to assigned EKCEP staff upon project completion. Any training or other efforts to familiarize EKCEP staff with site layouts, workflow for content updates, or other knowledge to successfully operate and maintain content on the website is a requirement.

Content

EKCEP staff will work with the selected vendor to develop any relevant content to be placed on each site. Content can include text, multimedia, and downloadable documents in PDF form. Content files will be made available for review by both parties via a Google Drive folder or other online file sharing service.

III. Project Budget and Timeline

EKCEP seeks a vendor who can complete this project no later than the final quarter of 2024. To ensure timely delivery, we request that your proposal include a detailed project timeline with the following milestones:

- **Phase 1:** Initial design concept and sitemap completion.
- **Phase 2:** Development of functional prototype with core features.
- **Phase 3:** Content migration and integration.
- **Phase 4:** Testing, quality assurance, and staff training.
- **Phase 5:** Final launch and deployment.

Additionally, please allocate time for feedback and revisions after each major milestone, along with training.

Budget

EKCEP will consider any proposal that includes reasonable costs for website development. For budgeting purposes, EKCEP requests a detailed cost breakdown in your proposal, including:

- Hourly rates for design, development, and testing
- Fixed fees for specific deliverables (e.g., sitemap, content migration)
- Hosting
- Any anticipated additional costs (e.g., third-party integrations)

Budgets may also include the cost for annual maintenance plans covered in the “Maintenance Plan” section above.

Procurement Timeline and Proposal Evaluations

This RFP will be available on the EKCEP, Inc. website at www.ekcep.org, beginning June 27, 2024. The timetable for this procurement process is:

- RFP Release: June 27, 2024.
- Proposals Due: July 26, 2024.
- Evaluation of Proposals: July 29, 2024 — August 9, 2024.
- Approval of Contract: August 16, 2024.

Each proposal will be evaluated by EKCEP’s Review Team based upon the bidder’s:

- Demonstrated ability to provide the necessary elements and complete the work described above.
- Cost reasonableness.
- Innovation and creativity in developing adequate and informative websites necessary to help EKCEP in its mission.

Right to Cancel and Negotiate

EKCEP, Inc. reserves the right to delay, amend, reissue, or cancel all or any part of this RFP at any time without prior notice.

This RFP does not commit EKCEP to accept any proposal. EKCEP will not be responsible for any costs incurred by a bidder in the preparation of responses to this RFP.

EKCEP reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to accept or reject any or all items in any proposal, and to award contracts in whole or in part as is deemed to be in the best interest of EKCEP, Inc. EKCEP, Inc. reserves the right to negotiate with any bidder after proposals are reviewed.

EKCEP, Inc. reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of the contract with successful bidders.

Questions

Any questions regarding this RFP should be directed to rfp@ekcep.org. Answers will be included both in the email response and online at ekcep.org/rfp.

IV. Proposal Submission Instructions and Content Requirements

A. Submission Instructions

EKCEP, Inc. must receive proposals no later than 4:00 p.m. EDT on July 26, 2024 COB. Bidders must submit an electronic copy of their proposal via email to: RFP@EKCEP.org.

B. Content Requirements

At a minimum, the proposal must consist of the following information to include:

- Overall budget estimate.
- Examples of past website development projects.
- Planned workflow to complete the project within the parameters set forth in this RFP.
- Strategy to complete training requirements noted in this RFP.
- Cybersecurity strategy.