Questions and Answers | Request for Proposals for Website Development

Updated May 30, 2025

Clarification on Project Scope.

MassHousing is seeking proposals from qualified firms for a full redesign and replacement of the Agency's website, masshousing.com. This includes development of a new user interface, user experience, navigation system and website taxonomy. The selected vendor will also be responsible for website testing and deployment.

Q: Is www.masshousing.com/mass-community-climate-bank in scope?

A: Yes, www.masshousing.com/mass-community-climate-bank and subpages are a part of the scope of this project. We will look to the vendor to recommend whether that content is more fully integrated with the rest of the website or continues to have its own branding, style, etc.

Q: Is https://consumer.sagentapps.com/MassHousing/LoanService part of the scope of this project or just a link to an external site?

A: No, https://consumer.sagentapps.com/MassHousing/LoanService is not a part of the scope of this project. It is a link to an external site.

Q: Are there specific technical or procedural requirements related to Massachusetts public records law, document management or record-keeping functionality?

A: No, we do not anticipate that the website will need to accommodate any unique technical or procedural requirements for compliance with the Massachusetts public records law, document management, or record-keeping.

Q: How will alignment with MassHousing's mission, culture, and values be evaluated or weighted relative to other factors such as price, technical capabilities, and past performance? Are there specific goals, metrics, or programs for engaging underutilized vendors or contractors that we should be aware of or incorporate into our proposal?

A: Proposals will be evaluated as a whole, taking into account all of the criteria as set forth in this RFP, to determine what is most advantageous to MassHousing. There are no specific weights assigned to one factor over another. It is the intent that respondents have the freedom and creative space necessary to make a proposal based on their unique expertise and experience in delivering the services and end-product. MassHousing is a mission driven organization that strongly embraces the [values that drive its culture](). The website will be one of the public faces of the agency, and we are seeking an expert partner to design and build its next iteration. It is important to MassHousing to work with a partner that can demonstrate an understanding of how an entity's embrace of its mission and values is reflected in its online identity.

Q: What is the expected go-live date for this project?

A: The expected go-live date is no later than August 1, 2026.

Q: What is the estimated budget or not-to-exceed amount for this project?

A: As stated in the RFP, vendors should provide a detailed budget for this project as part of their proposal.

Q: Should vendors include the cost of hosting in the proposal, or will hosting be procured separately?

A: Vendors should include one-time and recurring costs for hosting and management. Proposals that do not include hosting should include system requirements for pre-production and production environments.

Q: Can MassHousing share details about the current CMS and hosting environments?

A: MassHousing's website is currently built on the Sitecore platform and hosted on the Sitecore Managed Cloud. There are several custom applications built on the .Net framework.

Q: Does MassHousing have a preferred CMS or technology stack for the new website?

A: The selected vendor will be expected to provide recommendations for a CMS and other tools. We are open to continuing with Sitecore or moving to a different platform.

Q: What are the existing custom applications, third-party systems or databases that must be integrated or migrated?

A: The recommended solution should integrate Google Analytics/Tag Manager/Search Console and Constant Contact. Custom applications include forms to collect data and documents from users that are integrated with business applications using server-side and client-side web API calls. Additional integrations include HTML/JavaScript embeds of third-party components.

Q: Is content writing part of the scope of this project?

A: We expect that MassHousing will complete the bulk of content writing, with support from the vendor. Some content from the current website may be usable on the new website, depending on the taxonomy developed as part of this project. If you wish to do so, you may include content writing as a separate line item in your proposed budget.

Q: What is the anticipated level of participation from MassHousing staff in project phases such as discovery, content development, and testing?

A: Staff from MassHousing's Marketing and IT teams will be available throughout the project. Representatives from the executive team, business lines and other departments will be available as needed for discovery, content development and testing.

Q: Are you open to a hybrid delivery model with onshore and offshore resources?

A: No, all work must be performed in the United States.

Q: Will work be onsite or remote?

A: Work will be remote. The vendor may recommend onsite meetings as needed for discovery, training, etc.

Q: Can you provide an extension for proposals to be submitted?

A: The deadline for proposal submission is June 6, 2025 at 5 p.m. Eastern Time. We do not anticipate extending this deadline.

Q: Will MassHousing provide and manage the hosting environment, or is the vendor expected to propose, implement, and manage hosting? If so, are there technical or compliance standards that must be met? Is there a preferred hosting platform?

A: Platform infrastructure should be hosted or cloud-based and preferably third-party managed. Microsoft Azure infrastructure and platform "as-a-service" offerings are preferred. The vendor should implement robust security measures in all platform tiers and maintain security protocols to mitigate risk and support MassHousing's adopted security framework, NIST 800-171. Cloud or host data centers where the platform is hosted and maintained should meet modern compliance standards (e.g., SOC, ISO, FedRAMP). The platform should be highly available and support disaster recovery and business continuity requirements. All MassHousing data must reside in the United States.

Q: Will the vendor be responsible for recommending tools for document management, chatbots, and media compliance with public records law? Are any of these technologies currently in use by MassHousing?

A: Yes, the vendor will be responsible for recommending tools to meet MassHousing's goals and requirements. Documents are currently managed through Sitecore, MassHousing's current content management system.

Q: What is the required level of WCAG compliance? Will MassHousing provide accessibility benchmarks, preferred testing tools, or past audits to guide ADA/WCAG compliance?

A: The website should adhere to WCGA 2.1 Level AA standards. The vendor should recommend additional benchmarks and preferred testing tools. Because this project involves the development of a new website, past audits are not relevant.

Q: What is the required frequency for data backups (e.g., real-time, daily, weekly or monthly)? What is the expected data retention policy (e.g., how long should backups be stored)?

A: The following backup schedules and retention policies are the standard for MassHousing's PaaS-based applications running in Azure. We expect the new solution to follow these as closely as possible.

Application Backups

Backup Schedule	Retention Schedule
Hourly	30 Days broken down as follows: Days 1 – 3: Hourly backups Day 4 – 14: Every 3 hourly backups Day 15 – 30: Every 6 hourly backups

Database Backups

Backup Schedule	Retention Schedule
Full – Weekly Differential – Every 12 hours Log – Every 10 minutes	Point-in-Time – 35 Days Weekly Full – 6 Months Monthly Full – 1 Year Yearly – Week 1 for 1 year

Q: Will single sign-on be used to control administrative access to the site? If yes, please elaborate.

A: Single sign-on using industry standards such as SAML or OIDC is preferred for administrative access to the site. MassHousing's identity provider is Microsoft Entra ID.

Q: What types and levels of training are expected for staff who will manage the new website and content post-launch? How many staff will require training?

A: Training requirements will depend on the vendor's recommendations for a content management system/digital experience platform and hosting solution. A variety of training formats are acceptable (e.g., self-paced online, in-person, live online).

Q: Can MassHousing share user research, analytics, feedback and other data?

A: Access to user research, analytics and other data will be shared with the selected vendor at the start of the project.

Q: Which languages must be supported by the new website?

A: The current MassHousing website supports content in Spanish, Portuguese (Brazilian) and Simplified Chinese. At a minimum, those languages should be supported on the new website. We are open to considering automated translation tools, such as Google Translate.

Q: Will MassHousing provide translated content, or should the vendor include translation as part of its proposal?

A: Translation should be included as part of proposals. We are open to considering automated translation tools, such as Google Translate.