
Website Discovery, Design & Development

Introduction

Howard County Library System (HCLS) invites proposals from qualified firms to conduct a discovery phase and/or website design and development. The resulting product will be a user-friendly website that enables customers to easily find what they are looking for while also discovering how else the Library can meet their needs. The new site will reflect the Library’s brand, engage users, be visually appealing, function intuitively, and work seamlessly on desktops, tablets and mobile devices. It will include a content management system that enables HCLS staff to update the site as needed.

Scope/Purpose

This project has two phases: discovery and design/development. Vendors are encouraged to bid on either or both parts.

- The discovery portion of the project will include communicating with stakeholders (internal and external) to better understand pain points and desired features and functions.
- The design and development portion of the project will provide a customer-focused experience comparable to in-person services. The finished product will integrate all library services into an intuitive, community focused and educational experience.

Timeline

Date(s)	Item
Sep 13	Submissions due
Sep 15 - 22	Internal proposals review
Sep 23	Interview invitations issued
Sep 27 - Oct 1	Interviews by invitation
Oct 4	Vendor selection

Questions about the RFP

All questions should be directed to Addison Landers at **addison.landerson@hclibrary.org**. Howard County Library System reserves the right to share answers with other proposers if such information is necessary to proposers in submitting responses or if the lack of such information would be prejudicial to uninformed proposers.

All questions must be submitted by September 6.

Bid submission

To be considered, proposals should be emailed to **dorna.anderson@hclibrary.org**, by with the subject line of ***Proposal for Website Project***.

PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY SEPTEMBER 13, 2021.

Submissions received late may not be considered, at HCLS' discretion. Howard County Library System reserves the right to extend the date of submission and will provide due notice of such an extension.

Required information

- Proposal narrative, including the vendor's understanding of the scope of work.
- Firm overview, background and qualifications, experience reaching diverse populations, and portfolio
- Staffing information (names, roles, experience, and anticipated hours on project)
- Detailed timeline
- A document detailing project costs
- Any additional services and the rate for providing those services
- List of references with their contact information

Objectives/Goals

- Conduct market demographic research
- Conduct user studies to better understand pain points, desired features, SWOT
- Identify customer segments
- Analyze website analytics
- Identify underserved demographics
- Inform website information architecture, site map, naming, marketing, SEO, and wayfinding

Deliverables

- User experience (UX) and feature recommendations
- User persona development including current and underserved user types
- Site map and information architecture (IA) recommendations
- User research documentation, including interview transcripts/recordings

Requirements

Once completed and accepted by HCLS, all work, discovery documentation, files, and data become property of HCLS.

Wishlist

- Design thinking sessions
- Documentation and training sessions with development vendor(s)
- Documentation on new target demographics
- Documentation on how to reach diverse populations and non-English speakers

Part 2: Website Development

Deliverables

- A website that delivers exceptional experience regardless of device or screen size.
- Integrations to various third-party applications (listed below).
- Content management system. (events, blogs, podcasts, record sets, new pages).
- Provide training, documentation, and manuals.

Requirements

- Website maintenance will be managed by HCLS staff after project completion.
- Once the web site has been completed and accepted by HCLS, the web site design and all its contents, software, and architecture become property of HCLS (excluding third-party and open-source software).

Objectives/Goals

- Integrate many parts into one easy to use/navigate product
- Put all of HCLS' services at customers' fingertips
- Reach new demographics - utilize discovery process
- 508 compliant
- Secure website
- Easy for small team to manage
- Easy for wider team to add/edit content
- Allow select staff easy access to add and/or edit content using tiered permissions
- Increased site and catalogue search functionality

Wishlist Items

- Multiple languages (specifically Spanish and Korean)
- Single search for both site and catalogue
- User-restricted content (committee members, event staff, volunteers)
- Micro-sites/ co-branded webpages with unique navigation

- Automated notification for page authors to review
- Integrate all digital apps/services through API

Current Website Metrics/Audience

Howard County Library System's current website, hclibrary.org, launched in 2013 using WordPress CMS. The expansion of services and technical limitations have resulted in a suboptimal user experience.

Audience

HCLS' diverse audience is educationally minded. Customer segments include...

- Library users and event participants
- Community members in need of assistance
- HCLS staff, volunteers, and prospective employees
- Donors, prospective donors, board members, elected officials, and traditional media
- Educators, authors, and instructors

Current Integrations / Plug-ins

Library Market	librarymarket.com	Calendar of classes and events
Polaris version 6.3.2292	iii.com/products/polaris-ils/	Catalogue management, integrated library system (ILS)
Advanced Slider	wordpress.org/plugins/advanced-post-slider/	Sliders
issuu	issuu.com	Online publication distribution
Resources	hclibrary.org/research/online-resources-alphabetically/	Online/Digital Services available to customers
Eventbrite	eventbrite.com	Event subscription
Soundcloud	soundcloud.com	Podcast distribution
Gravity forms	gravityforms.com	WordPress forms
Page Builder	wpbakery.com	WYSIWYG editor

Announcer	aakashweb.com	Status bar
LibraryAware EBSCO	hclibrary.org/research/nextreads/	Automated book recommendation newsletter
READsquared	readsquared.com	Year-round reading program
Google Maps API	www.google.com/maps	Locations and hours
Google Translate	translate.google.com	Language translator
Survey Monkey	surveymonkey.com	Surveys
Paylocity	paylocity.com	HR management, job applications, volunteer applications
Remote Patron Authentication	N/A	login to online library accounts and remote sites that require a library barcode and PIN
eTapestry	blackbaud.com	Donor management

External Websites

The following HCLS websites/blogs were developed outside of HCLibrary.org due to current website constraints.

Chapter Chats	chapterchats.org	Incorporate into new site
Created While Isolated	createdwhileisolated.org	Incorporate into new site or sunset
Evening in the Stacks [and capability for related sites for future]	ww2.eventrebels.com/er/EventHomePage/CustomPage.jsp?ActivityID=35618&ItemID=119335	Incorporate into our site; unique branding related to theme of annual fundraiser
Friends & Foundation of HCLS	friendshcls.org	Link from site

Technical Components

Web Server	Nginx: Version 1.12.2 (not apache)
PHP	Version 5.5.38
MySQL	14.14
CMS	WordPress

Current Customer metrics

HOCO population	330,000
Card holders*	238,275
Items borrowed*	1,193,180
Branch visits*	1,413,471
Website visits*	1,736,091
Class attendance*	188,850
Most viewed pages	books-movies-music, summer, locations, research
Web pages	600+
Digital products	130 vetted databases
Classes	19 program types

*FY2020

Inspirational Websites

Multnomah County Library	multcolib.org	The search functionality integrates all components (catalogue, events, database, etc.)
San Francisco Public Library	sfpl.org	Navigation and home page content

Seattle Public Library	spl.org	Prominent collection and staff picks
Austin Public Library	library.austintexas.gov/apl-plus	Winner of Urban Libraries Council Top Innovator Award for Customer Experience https://www.urbanlibraries.org/innovations/apl
Carroll County Public Library	library.carr.org	Navigation expands on hover
Enoch Pratt Free Library	prattlibrary.org	Navigation, mobile experience, design
