

# Request for Proposals

## Alaska Electrical Trust Funds: Web Design Services, Hosting, and Support



### Alaska Electrical Trust Funds

PENSION FUND – HEALTH AND WELFARE FUND – LEGAL FUND  
701 E Tudor Suite 200 • Anchorage, AK 99503  
(907) 276-1246 • (800) 478-1246 • Fax: (907) 278-7576  
[www.aetf.com](http://www.aetf.com)



January 1, 2022

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Overview

The Alaska Electrical Trust Funds (“AETF”) has issued this Request for Proposal (“RFP”) in order to select and contract with a company (“Vendor”) to create a new website that is a modern, highly attractive and built with responsive web design.

AETF is seeking proposals from highly qualified, experienced website development companies to design, develop and implement its public-facing website. The chosen strategic partner must be a firm that has experience in managing union retirement trust website design projects, and expertise with best practices regarding:

- successful website redesign
- user experience and usability testing
- information architecture
- website development and deployment
- content strategy
- social media integration
- search engine optimization
- responsive design

This RFP does not obligate AETF to award a contract or complete the project and AETF reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest.

## 1.2. About the Alaska Electrical Trust Funds

The Alaska Electrical Trust Funds is a family of three Taft-Hartley multiemployer trust funds that maintain four separate plans:

- Alaska Electrical Pension Plan, a defined benefit pension plan;
- Alaska Electrical Retirement Savings Plan, a defined contribution 401(k) plan;
- Alaska Electrical Health and Welfare plan, a health benefits plan; and
- Alaska Electrical Legal Plan, a plan that provides reimbursement of legal expenses.

These trusts were established pursuant to collective bargaining between the Alaska Chapter of NECA and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) 1547. As employee benefit trusts, they are subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), and a web of complex regulations by the federal

Department of Labor (DOL), Internal Revenue Service, Health and Human Services and other federal agencies. In particular, DOL regulations and guidance address participant disclosures and use of electronic means to satisfy these rules, as well as privacy and security of participant information.

The Trusts serve a population of approximately 10,500 active and retired members, who are employed by 150 separate employers who transfer contributions monthly to the Trusts' Administrative Office. The website is intended to support the Administrative Office operations as it serves members accessing their Trust benefits, and the contributing employers in administration of timely payment of bargained contributions.

### 1.3. Project Timeline

<b>Project Timeline Dates</b>	
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Date</b>
RFP Release Date	January 1, 2022
Written Inquiries Due	January 21, 2022
Response to Vendor Questions	February 1, 2022
RFP Submission Deadline	February 14, 2022
Completion of RFP Evaluations	March 1, 2022
Interviews	March 7, 2022
Final Vendor Selection	March 14, 2022
Anticipated Website Launch*	August 1, 2022

\* This is the date AETF would like to launch the updated website, but we recognize that Vendors may propose other launch dates based on review of this RFP and any follow up questions. If Vendors would like to propose a different launch date, they must include that in their RFP submission and/or in the final negotiated contract, once a Vendor is selected.

## **1.4. AETF Contact Information**

This RFP is issued by the Alaska Electrical Trust Funds (“AETF”). The point of contact for all questions or requests for additional information is:

AETF Project Manager  
International Data Systems, Inc. (on behalf of AETF)  
401 East Fireweed Lane #202  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Email: RFP@international-data.net

All questions shall be via email only. All contact with personnel employed by AETF except for the contact persons named above with respect to this RFP shall be prohibited. Improper contact may constitute grounds for rejection of your proposal.

## **1.5. RFP Inquiries**

All inquiries regarding this RFP including requests for additional information or clarification and proposed modifications or amendments to the RFP must be submitted in writing in accordance with 1.4 above. All inquiries must be received no later than 5:00 PM on January 21, 2022 and must be labeled “AETF Website Project.” Each inquiry must include the inquirer’s name, firm, telephone number and email address. Each inquiry should begin by referencing the RFP page number and section to which it relates.

AETF will attempt to provide any assistance or additional information of a reasonable nature that may be requested by interested Vendors. Telephone calls will not be accepted regarding this RFP.

Inquiries received after the January 21, 2022, 5:00 PM deadline will not be considered. All inquiries received before the deadline will be compiled and responses to inquiries will be posted on AETF website, located at [aetf.com](http://aetf.com).

## **1.6. Terms of Service**

AETF wishes to engage a Vendor for the duration of this project and for any needed on-going maintenance services. Specific deliverables related to the scope of work for this project will be included in the final agreement.

## 2. Goals and Background

### 2.1. Project Objectives and Goals

The website is intended to support the Administrative Office operations as it serves the members in accessing their Trust benefits, and the contributing employers in administration of timely payment of contributions. In providing these benefits, the Trusts partner with other third parties (e.g., the recordkeeper for the Retirement Savings Plan is John Hancock Retirement Plan Services, the Health Plan partners with Aetna as its preferred provider network provider as well as a third-party claims administration firm, Zenith American Solutions, to process medical claims). The new website must incorporate access to these third-party service provider partners' resources.

- 2.1.1.** Interactive and Engaging Website: We are seeking to redesign our website to include an intuitive, easy-to-use interface that allows members, employers, and business partners to find information easily and complete tasks quickly and easily regardless of the device they are using. The solution will be easy to maintain for our administrators and content creators.
- 2.1.2.** Purpose of our New Website: Our new site should serve the needs of all users by letting them easily find what they are seeking, providing access to key information on a 24/7 basis, allowing users to share information and interact with our staff when needed, and providing members with secure access to specific plan and program information and services. It should provide a pleasant experience to all users by making it easy for them to complete their tasks or find what they want in a straightforward manner.
- 2.1.3.** Strategic Partnership: We want a Vendor partner who understands the role, business functions and complex regulatory environment of Taft-Hartley trusts like AETF, who will help guide us to where we want to be today, and provide ongoing services and support to keep us there in the future.
- 2.1.4.** Responsive Site: Visitors to our site will utilize a wide variety of devices to access our website, including computers, tablets and mobile smart phones. Our new website should automatically detect the screen resolution of any device and respond with a view of the site that is optimized specifically for that screen. This will ensure that all users will be able to view our site, no matter what device they are using.
- 2.1.5.** Accessible Site: Our new website should comply with World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 (Level AA compliance) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In addition, the Vendor should follow best practices, voluntary standards, and

guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

**2.1.6.** Flexible Solution: The new site should build upon proven and accepted website development standards while maintaining flexibility to easily grow and add new functionality over time and with minimal cost.

- Simplify and Streamline Administration: The solution should simplify website administration, allowing users of all skill levels to update assigned sections of the website, and streamline business operations.

**2.2.7.** Security: The federal DOL has issued guidance on security of participant information. The Health Trust is subject to HIPAA privacy requirements and recent DOL guidelines on security of retirement plan information must be taken into account and compliance documented on a recurrent basis.

## **2.2. Target Audiences**

Our members and their families, and the contributing employers to the Trusts are the primary target audience for the AETF website. Secondary audience includes others who may need to access information about AETF plans.

## **2.3. Our Current Environment**

**2.3.1.** Existing Website: The existing website was launched in 2002.

**2.3.2.** Content Management: The website was built on a custom HTML template and consists of pages managed internally via Microsoft Expression Web 4.

**2.3.3.** Content Strategy: Current content consists of approximately 100+ pages and 50+ PDF documents. We anticipate a significant reduction of the number of pages on the new website and would like Vendors to provide best practices and possibly additional training or consulting services for content strategy. Vendors should also provide best practices and suggestions for developing content with plain language standards.

**2.3.4.** Eligibility Verification: The Current site has an unpublished and unlinked page that clinics use to verify eligibility. It uses two files from the AS400 to look up eligibility via last name or SSN. It is only compatible with Microsoft Internet Explorer with special settings enabled. This functionality needs to be improved and secured.

**2.3.5.** Website Documents: The site contains documents in PDF.

**2.3.6.** Website Platform: Windows Server 2019 using IIS.

**2.3.7.** Website Hosting: The site is currently hosted Internally on a virtual server system in house at the Main office, the server resides in a network DMZ behind a Watchguard Firewall and a Citrix Netscaler ADC.



## 3. Scope of Work

### 3.1. Vendor Experience and Development Criteria

- 3.1.1.** Collaborative Effort: The website will be developed through collaboratively between AETF and the Vendor, and facilitated under the supervision of a dedicated project management professional in the direct employ of the Vendor.
- 3.1.2.** Skilled Team: Vendor will supply a team of user experience, design and development professionals to supplement the development process led by the project manager. This team should include staff members with experience designing a Taft-Hartley trust fund website, with examples of successful user experience design, navigation and information architecture, modern website design, accessibility, and support and training of the content management system.
- 3.1.3.** Proven Development Process: Vendor should have a proven development process and flexible timeline structure that favors the availability and time commitment of AETF.
- 3.1.4.** Proven Content Management System: The proposed content management software must be a proven platform for website development and labor union and/or trust fund website architecture. Development that is requested and approved by AETF should be performed by the Vendor utilizing agile software development methodologies that encourage collaboration between the developer and AETF.
- 3.1.5.** Internal Development Staff: AETF prefers a Vendor utilizing its own development staff rather than subcontracting pieces of the project development to additional Vendors.

### 3.2. Design Guidelines and Qualifications

The design of the website should be welcoming and attractive, created by the Vendor's professional design staff. The final version of the design should be a collaborative effort between AETF and the Vendor, incorporating elements that effectively represent AETF brand and image through a data-driven and consultative development process.

The Vendor should utilize a data-driven design process to gather information to complete a comprehensive redesign of our website. The techniques should include the best practices of usability and user experience:

- 3.2.1. Stakeholder Survey:** The Vendor will work closely with key AETF team members and other potential stakeholders with the purpose of validating goals and tasks for the new website. The Vendor will interface with the AETF third party service providers in integrating access to their content.
- 3.2.2. Mobile Usability:** The Vendor should analyze the current site for mobile usability and review the mobile site statistics to understand the needs of the current visitors.
- 3.2.3. User Experience Testing:** Usability testing allows Vendor to conduct user research with participants in their natural environment to test interaction and identify issues with navigation and layout.

The result of the usability design study should be a written report with design recommendations and a wireframe version of the proposed new website that will be used to develop homepage and interior page design concepts.

Specific design guidelines include:

- 3.2.4. Accessibility:** Website should comply with World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 (Level AA compliance) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In addition, the Vendor should follow best practices, voluntary standards, and guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).
- 3.2.5. Consistent Website Design:** Website design must remain consistent throughout all pages to maximize usability, except where differentiating between certain sections of the website as requested by AETF.
- 3.2.6. Design Overview:** Website design must be visually appealing, incorporating AETF colors and logo where appropriate. *See Appendix A.*
- 3.2.7. Design Process:** The Vendor shall develop an original design for AETF and, throughout the website development process, consult with key team members of AETF to make revisions and alterations to the Vendor's original design submission.
- 3.2.8. Easy Updating:** Design elements should include engaging images, photographs, logos, and buttons that are easily updated or swapped out by AETF staff at any time and without incurring any additional implementation or update charges.
- 3.2.9. Website Design and Content Ownership:** Ownership of the website design and all content should be transferred to AETF upon completion of the project.

**3.2.10. Security.** Compliant with US Department of Labor guidance as to privacy and security:

- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa/key-topics/retirement-benefits/cybersecurity>
- <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ebsa/key-topics/retirement-benefits/cybersecurity/best-practices.pdf>

### **3.3. Responsive Website**

The Vendor is expected to produce a responsive website for AETF to meet the needs of users accessing the site on a variety of devices, including computers, tablets and smart phones. Vendor must have proven success in previous responsive design projects. The solution should automatically detect the screen resolution of any device and respond with a view of the site that is optimized specifically for that screen. This will ensure that all users will be able to view our site, no matter what device they are using.

The project is expected to include:

**3.3.1. Clean Visuals:** The general design of the website will incorporate AETF logo and branding as identified in 3.2.

**3.3.2. Responsive Site:** Site design that includes, but not limited to:

- 3.3.2.1. Creation of responsive templates;
- 3.3.2.2. Creation of fluid grids;
- 3.3.2.3. Navigation redesign;
- 3.3.2.4. Taxonomy and site map;
- 3.3.2.5. Image adjustments;
- 3.3.2.6. Ability to adjust or modify responsive views on individual pages.

### **3.4. System Functionality**

The Vendor's proposed content management system (CMS) should be a web-based application that provides the core of the entire development process, being both the platform for development and the tool by which system administrators and contributors can update the new website. The CMS may feature plug-in, applications, or modules that enhance the functionality of the website, though core features should center around ease-of-use, flexibility and, for ongoing stability, an established information architecture and hosting environment.

The CMS must allow non-technical content contributors the following abilities:

- 3.4.1.** Administrative Dashboard: The administrative portion of the CMS shall be accessible for all content contributors and feature a customizable interface that displays critical shortcuts, on-site items that require attention, recent activity logs and an internal messaging system that displays administrative messages and updated information.
- 3.4.2.** Automatic Sitemap: The CMS should automatically create and update a sitemap and on-page breadcrumbs when content is added, edited or removed from the site.
- 3.4.3.** Content Expiration: Notification of expiration of site content shall be received by content owners through notifications available via the CMS, including a dashboard administrative display and e-mail notifications. The dashboard should also detail the dates for when specific content was last updated and allow for notifications when certain time periods are reached.
- 3.4.4.** Content Management: A way to add, edit and move content directly on an assigned webpage without the need to utilize or be trained on a backend administrative system (i.e. HTML).
- 3.4.5.** Content Preview: Content publishers must have the ability to preview changes prior to publishing on the site.
- 3.4.6.** Content Scheduling: Content added to the site, whether as part of page content or additions to plug-in applications or modular elements shall feature delayed posting and automatic expiration abilities.
- 3.4.7.** Hyperlinking: Users who wish to add simple links – either internal or external – should be provided with an option to do so through an automatic hyperlinking option.
- 3.4.8.** Menu Updates: Content publishers should be able to add and update menu items if assigned the appropriate permission level.
- 3.4.9.** Page Templates:
  - 3.4.9.1. Content publishers must have the option to use pre-created page templates to assist in the formatting and development of new content.
  - 3.4.9.2. Content publishers should have the ability to place widgets or content blocks on page templates that serve specific purposes and streamline the template building process. Widgets can represent any key function such as calendars, directory, e-notification, FAQs, search, etc. Widgets should have settings to customize their look and function to meet specific needs.

3.4.9.3. Content publishers must have the option to share templates with and use templates from a wider community pool which shares consistent page development.

**3.4.10. Spell Check:** Editor should include spell-check functionality.

**3.4.11. Support Access:** Trained content creators of the CMS shall have access to support via e-mail or phone.

**3.4.12. WYSIWYG Editor:** The CMS must have an advanced WYSIWYG rich text editor for content additions and updates that, while allowing flexibility for higher-end content contributors, is simple and straightforward, giving basic content contributors a basic set of fewer options to alter established site styles.

**3.4.13. Custom Short Links:** Users should be able to create a shortened link to a web page, internal or external, to make it easier to click, copy, or share in marketing materials and social media.

The system shall also include the following features for use by administrative users:

**3.4.14. Approval Workflow:** The ability to manage administrative access to the site through a permission system that defines in-system rights and workflows including content approval for both general content and modular applications that are included as a part of the CMS. Administrators should be able to define the workflow, assign the workflow to content groups and content types, and assign users to workflow rules. The system should support two or more approval levels.

**3.4.15. Create / Delete / Manage User Accounts for the AETF Website:** The ability to manage the portions of the website that will contain Personal Identifiable Information (PII) or other secure data, including the creation of user / member accounts and passwords to access this secure data, managing user / member accounts, and deleting user / member accounts. Needs to maintain the existing process AETF uses for member management.

**3.4.16. CMS Activity Reporting:** A report detailing all changes and activity taking place on the website through content contributors and administrators, which can be filtered by start and end dates, times, by content type and by action taken, and exportable.

**3.4.17. Content Categories:** Administrators shall have the ability to create content categories within CMS applications and modules and edit the parameters for categories.

**3.4.18. Graphics Administration:** Administration of on-site banners and graphics, with the ability to add new banners and on-site graphical elements and assign those elements to specified areas of the site.

- 3.4.19.** Login History: A separate history report detailing user login history, including the user type, the date and time of the attempted login, the IP address of the user and whether or not the login attempt was successful.
- 3.4.20.** Menu Administration: Administrators shall have the ability to add, edit, update and move menu items, affecting overall site structure and organization.
- 3.4.21.** Permissions: The permission system shall be divisible into both user administration and group administration, allowing permission levels to be attributed to groups to which users can be added.
- 3.4.22.** Site Search Statistics: Access to site search statistics, including the ability to filter searched terms by date and time, which can also be exported.
- 3.4.23.** User-Friendly URLs: System should allow for creation of user-friendly URLs.

### **3.5. System Administration**

- 3.5.1.** Broken Link Review: An administrative center for reviewing quality assurance, including detailing broken links on the website, including the referring page location so that links can be corrected.
- 3.5.2.** Dynamic Menu Structure: A dynamic menu structure, with the ability to easily add, edit, move and delete menu items in multiple structural areas of the site.
- 3.5.3.** Infinite Menu Levels: An infinite menu level system that allows the addition of an unlimited number of menu levels by the AETF.
- 3.5.4.** Infinite Page Structure: An infinite page structure system that allows the addition of an unlimited number of pages by the AETF.
- 3.5.5.** SSL Certificate: If necessary, one or more SSL certificates to encrypt data contained in site transmissions.
- 3.5.6.** Website Analytics: An administrative center for reviewing, filtering and exporting overall website statistics, including the ability to view statistics by page or section and presenting the information in a graphical representation.

### **3.6. System Features**

- 3.6.1.** Accessibility Add-ons: Accessibility software embedded in the website that offers users access to larger fonts and audible content.
- 3.6.2.** Advanced Site Search: Provide an internal site search that:
  - 3.6.2.1. Users should be able to sort search results by date, content, title or relevance; users should be able to filter by type of

- content and easily apply advanced search techniques, such as Boolean, if desired.
- 3.6.2.2. Search functionality should search web content as well as the contents of files (PDFs, Word Documents, etc.)
  - 3.6.2.3. Is contained exclusively within the AETF's site and not outsourced to an external page hosted by a search provider such as Google.
- 3.6.3.** APIs, Import and Export: Major components should have import and export capabilities, and APIs should be defined.
- 3.6.4.** Contact Us Form: Capability for citizens to contact AETF staff through the use of a "contact us" form on the site for each division and department.
- 3.6.5.** Document Archive: A document archive for specified categories of documents with built-in filtering abilities and search capabilities.
- 3.6.6.** Document Storage: An on-site document storage application with unlimited levels of folders, providing centralized storage of any type of file.
- 3.6.7.** E-Notifications: Want a tool that provides a sign-up box allowing users to add their email addresses and/or cell phone numbers (for text messages) to receive important notices. Users should be able to set their preferences and should have their sign-up validated via a confirmation email. Request multi-factor authentication for signups.
- 3.6.8.** E-Newsletter: Solution should have E-newsletter tool functionality.
- 3.6.9.** Embedded Audio/Video/Media and Social Media: Easy embedding of audio, video, media and social-networking applications with associated embed codes.
- 3.6.10.** Event Calendar: An event calendar application that allows an unlimited number of calendar categories or types to be added to the site, with an unlimited number of items allowed to be added within each individual category. The following features should also be available:
- 3.6.10.1. Capability to set up calendar events as single or recurring events, with options for daily, weekly, monthly or annual recurrences.
  - 3.6.10.2. Calendar events shall provide space for full descriptions including the ability to post images, tables and video within the description. The site visitor shall be able to view calendars by a list of events, a week view or a month view.
  - 3.6.10.3. Calendars shall be filterable by category, a start date and an end date, with the ability to search for keywords.
  - 3.6.10.4. Ability for site visitors to subscribe to updates from individual calendar categories through e-mail (HTML or plain-text) or SMS text messages.

- 3.6.11. Extranet:** The solution should have the capability to deliver an extranet or password protected area of the website available only to those users / members approved to access secure content.
- 3.6.12. FAQ Tool:** Solution should have a FAQ application that allows an unlimited number of FAQ categories or types to be added to the site, with an unlimited number of items allowed to be added within each individual category.
- 3.6.13. Form Creator:** Solution should have an online form development tool for AETF staff to develop interactive forms:
- 3.6.13.1. Ability to have unlimited categories of forms, with an unlimited number of forms in each category.
  - 3.6.13.2. Ability for citizens to complete and submit forms electronically. Method by which form data is stored in a database and can be exported in a usable format from the CMS.
  - 3.6.13.3. Capability to merge forms with other applications of the CMS. Ability to customize forms for other applications of the CMS and tie directly into those tools.
  - 3.6.13.4. Ability to import items from forms available via third party sources (state agencies) and replicate on AETF forms.
- 3.6.14. HTML Code:** The solution should have the capability to view the HTML code of any individual page and directly add or alter the code as necessary.
- 3.6.15. Image Management:** Image management tools for the addition of images to on-site content through web pages and modular elements associated with the CMS.
- 3.6.15.1. Image editing abilities on uploaded images, including the ability to change opacity, resize images dynamically based on width and height, ability to constrain proportions, flip images, rotate images, crop images, restore images and save altered images as a thumbnail or alteration of the original upload or to replace the original upload with the altered image.
  - 3.6.15.2. Capacity to upload multiple images at one time and associate images with specific pages; the maximum file size should be no less than two (2) megabytes.
  - 3.6.15.3. Ability to preview images prior to association with on-site content.
  - 3.6.15.4. Ability to alter image properties, including image width, image height, capability to associate or disassociate width and height, border color, border width, image alignment, margins and application of CSS classes from overall website styles.
  - 3.6.15.5. Full accessibility options provided in an easy-to-use interface that promotes all image-based aspects relating to Section 508



of the Rehabilitation Act, including specification of alternate text and long descriptions.

- 3.6.16.** Language Translation: Solution should have functionality to have multiple language translations. Specifically, we would like to include the following languages in our solution: Spanish, Tagalog, and Yupik.
- 3.6.17.** News Posting: The solution should have the ability for use to post press releases, features stories and “what’s new” content on the site. News content should have an auto archiving functionality to archive posts after a certain time frame. The News should also have RSS feeds automatically available if desired by website visitors.
- 3.6.18.** Remote Login and Update: Secure access for employees to work remotely and/or update the site through the use of a mobile device.
- 3.6.19.** Services Directory: A services directory organizes the functions of an organization instead of departments. This is key to serving the needs of the community by letting users search by topic or services. The service directory should allow users to search by keyword and should filter by category.
- 3.6.20.** Single Sign-On: Should have a component where registered users can log in, view and update their information, all from their dashboard. Registered members can be added through the CMS, imported from a spreadsheet or users can add themselves via the frontend user interface.
- 3.6.21.** Staff Directory: A staff directory with options for expanded staff biographies and images; e-mail addresses associated with directory listings shall be automatically obscured from automated methods e-mail collection.
- 3.6.22.** Tagging: Ability to tag any content and search, sort or view based on those tags.
- 3.6.23.** Third-Party Portal: Ability to connect AETF website users with existing 3rd party applications currently in use, including: EDGE™ Hub (see <https://edge.zenith-american.com/landingPage.php>)
- 3.6.24.** User-centered Content: Organization of the site content will be functional and user-centered for ease of use by members and employers.

### **3.7. Technology/Platform Requirements**

- 3.7.1.** Browser Support: AETF is looking for the new website to support mobile and desktop versions of Apple Safari, Google Chrome, Microsoft Internet Explorer and Edge, and Mozilla Firefox. The site should support all versions of the browsers that have been released within the last 5 years.
- 3.7.2.** DDoS Mitigation: The hosted solution should protect the website against Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) and other cyberattacks, and should be able to detect and mitigate malicious traffic within seconds. The solution

should have smart- detection technology that can identify the source and analyze the behavior of the attack.

- 3.7.3.** Disaster Recovery: In the event of any outage impacting the primary data center, the hosting solution must have a disaster recovery or backup data center where our website visitors will continue to be able to access our site. The Recovery Time Objective (RTO) should be 60 minutes or less and the data replication (Recovery Point Object or RPO) should be 15 minutes or less.
- 3.7.4.** Hosting Data Center and Backup Data Center: The hosting platform must be in a certified data center (SSAE 16 Type II Compliant) with multiple layers of security access, redundant ISP providers, backup power and redundant generator, and firewall protection.
- 3.7.5.** Page Load Time: The solution should ensure that pages load on an average of 1.5 seconds or less.
- 3.7.6.** Programming Experience: Explain your firm's experience with other programming capabilities that would be useful in developing websites.
- 3.7.7.** Responsive CMS Recommendation: AETF is looking to have the Vendor recommend a content management system. Explain your firm's experience utilizing recommended CMS in designing responsive websites.
- 3.7.8.** System Uptime Guarantee: The hosting platform should have a guaranteed uptime of 99.9% and be backed by a Service Level Agreement (SLA).
- 3.7.9.** Third Party Plugins: AETF will allow the Vendor to use third-party plugins where appropriate as potential solutions for a requirement.
- 3.7.10.** Web and Database Servers: Preference will be given to Vendors that split website management between web servers and SQL database servers in order to optimize load time and efficiency in the hosting environment.

## **3.8. Maintenance and Support**

The Vendor's CMS, including all features and modular applications associated with the CMS, must have qualified and available support included as a part of ongoing services to maintain the CMS, using guidelines, structures and materials meeting the following criteria:

- 3.8.1.** Online Training Videos: An online repository of training videos for the purposes of fully training new staff members or retraining existing staff members.
- 3.8.2.** Support: The Vendor shall provide access to live support available via e-mail or phone during Vendor's normal business hours. The support team must be fluent in the functionality and uses of both the content management system's features and associate applications and modules.

- 3.8.3.** Support Materials: 24/7 access to support materials including, but not limited to: online training manuals, support FAQs, customer support forums, instructional videos, informational newsletters, informational and support-driven webinars (live and archived), request forms, online education courses and support-related updates through common social networking mediums.
- 3.8.4.** Support Service Level Agreement: In all submitted proposals, Vendors shall be able to produce a Service Level Agreement that details guarantees of customer support as well as a service escalation process.

While website content updates are to be managed by AETF through the CMS, Vendor must commit to regular maintenance and updating of the CMS and associated applications for the purposes of keeping the existing software up-to-date as well as introducing new functionality and applications.

Vendor shall commit to:

- 3.8.5.** CMS Development Process: An internal process dedicated to reviewing new technologies and implementing development projects to provide a more robust CMS with additional features and applications.
- 3.8.6.** CMS Improvements: Regular maintenance of the CMS to improve existing functionality and, when appropriate, take AETF requests into consideration.
- 3.8.7.** CMS New Features: Rolling upgrades of the solution that strengthen and update the CMS's functionality and associated applications.
- 3.8.8.** Software Service Level Agreement: In all submitted proposals, Vendors shall be able to produce a Service Level Agreement that details guarantees of upgrades and the dedicated process for improving the software purchased by AETF.

### **3.9. Additional Options**

Although AETF has these specific requirements, it is also interested in your ideas for the approach of redesigning the style of AETF website. We encourage respondents to consider and propose alternative solutions and recommendations. We are particularly interested in specific web functionality that your company may have already developed and deployed for other customers.

## **4. Evaluation of Proposals**

### **4.1. Evaluation of Submitted Proposals**

AETF will conduct a comprehensive, fair and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. All proposals that are properly submitted will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed below. All proposals that are properly submitted will be evaluated by the Evaluation Committee that will make recommendations for the award.

### **4.2. Evaluation Criteria**

This set of criteria will be used to evaluate each Vendor's proposal. A contract will be awarded to the Vendor that best satisfies the overall requirements of the RFP. Each proposal will be evaluated based on the level of creativity, differentiation and measurability.

**4.2.1.** Long-term Strategic Outlook and Partnership (20%)

**4.2.2.** Taft-Hartley/Multiemployer Employee Benefit Trust Fund Experience and Capacity (25%)

**4.2.3.** Features and Function of CMS (10%)

**4.2.4.** Technical Expertise (20%)

**4.2.5.** Client List and References (5%)

**4.2.6.** Pricing (20%)

### **4.3. Evaluation**

Proposals will be distributed to the members of the AETF RFP Evaluation Committee for evaluation utilizing the criteria set forth above.

### **4.4. Interviews and Demonstrations**

AETF will schedule in-person or web-based interviews with the top three companies based on satisfying the evaluation criteria above. AETF will reach out to the main contact at each of the three companies to schedule a date and time that works for the company as well as the RFP Evaluation Committee.

### **4.5. Recommendation for Award**

After the interviews have been conducted, the RFP Evaluation Committee shall recommend award to the successful Vendor based on the outcome of the interview process. AETF reserves the right to make an award, not to make an award, or to cancel this RFP either before or after the date of the RFP response deadline.

#### **4.6. Contract Discussions**

Upon approval by the committee, AETF shall enter into contract discussions with the Successful Vendor. If the terms and conditions of a contract cannot be successfully established within a reasonable amount of time (as determined by AETF), then contract discussions will be terminated and contract discussions with the next highest ranking Vendor will commence. Negotiations shall continue at the sole option of AETF until a contract is signed and approved or all proposals are rejected and the RFP is withdrawn.

#### **4.7. Notice of Award**

All Vendors submitting a response to this RFP will be notified in writing of the award of a contract if and when an award is made. If no award is made, all Vendors will be notified accordingly. For the purposes of this RFP, an award shall be deemed to have been made upon the completion of contract negotiations.

## 5. Vendor Qualifications and Obligations

All questions contained in this RFP must be answered. Failure by a Vendor to answer all questions may result in the proposal being rejected.

### 5.1. Documents to Be Submitted

Vendor must submit the following information to be considered (include the corresponding item number with each response):

#### **5.1.1. Executive Summary**

- 5.1.1.1. Summarize on one page or less the key products and services you are proposing. Explain which RFP requirements these products are intended to meet and the benefits if we use these products and services.
- 5.1.1.2. Summarize your overall strategy and approach for delivering web redesign and development projects.

#### **5.1.2. Corporate Profile**

- 5.1.2.1. Provide a brief overview of your firm's history and philosophy.
- 5.1.2.2. State the year the Vendor started in the business of selling CMS solutions and/or web design services.
- 5.1.2.3. Where is the Vendor company's headquarters located?
- 5.1.2.4. Describe the process of how your company works with remote customers.
- 5.1.2.5. Indicate whether the business is a parent or subsidiary.

#### **5.1.3. Vendor System Information**

- 5.1.3.1. For hosted solutions, describe your hardware and software configuration as Attachment A.
- 5.1.3.2. Describe the architecture, languages and tools used to develop your proposed solution.
- 5.1.3.3. Provide details on the licensing requirements and a copy of software license agreements as Attachment B in your response.
- 5.1.3.4. Describe your DDoS Mitigation solution.

#### **5.1.4. Services and Implementation**

- 5.1.4.1. Provide an in-depth list of your firm's capabilities.
- 5.1.4.2. Explain your firm's experience in developing responsive websites.

- 5.1.4.3. Describe your organization's experience with implementing multi-lingual websites.
- 5.1.4.4. Identify what uniquely distinguishes your offering from your competitors.
- 5.1.4.5. Describe your experience in implementing labor union and/or trust fund market solutions.
- 5.1.4.6. Describe your implementation approach, project management tools, and methodologies for the proposed solution.
- 5.1.4.7. Submit a detailed implementation plan which will address requirements, customizations, content migration, implementation schedule, delivery milestones and responsibilities for each party as Attachment C in your response.
- 5.1.4.8. Describe any optional services that could be included with our solution:
  - Advanced training
  - Content strategy
  - Site analytics reporting

**5.1.5. Client Examples**

- 5.1.5.1. Provide three examples of responsive websites your firm has developed. Clearly explain the design objectives, the outcome and whether your firm managed the entire site or specific modules or applications within the site.
- 5.1.5.2. Provide three client references in your proposal, including a current contact name, organization name, phone number and email.

**5.1.6. Project Team**

- 5.1.6.1. The success of the design and implementation depends on several factors including experienced project management, a planned approach and coordination of content population. The selected Vendor must provide an experienced project manager to lead the implementation process.
- 5.1.6.2. Define the process, project management, and team structure that would execute this type of solution.
- 5.1.6.3. Define the interim project reviews you will utilize to gain team, management, and key stakeholder buy-in and approval to move to the next phase of the project.

- 5.1.6.4. Define and describe the team members that would execute a project for the AETF. Identify their experience, roles, and length of time with your organization. Specify the primary point of contact.
- 5.1.6.5. Define how your process manages or mitigates client changes throughout the life of a project.

**5.1.7. Documentation**

- 5.1.7.1. Provide a list of the technical documentation the Vendor will provide prior to the launch of the website.
- 5.1.7.2. How often is documentation updated?
- 5.1.7.3. Is online assistance available with your system?

**5.1.8. Training**

- 5.1.8.1. Describe the training that accompanies the system implementation.
- 5.1.8.2. What types of training materials are provided?
- 5.1.8.3. Do you offer on-site training?
- 5.1.8.4. Do you offer train-the-trainer classes?
- 5.1.8.5. Describe your training staff's qualifications and experience.

**5.1.9. Software Support and Maintenance**

- 5.1.9.1. Describe the software support/maintenance programs available.
- 5.1.9.2. Does the maintenance program include all future software upgrades?
- 5.1.9.3. Describe the hours of support you provide? Where is it located? Is it staffed by your own employees or is it a third-party facility? Briefly discuss technical support staffing numbers, staff experience, etc.
- 5.1.9.4. Describe your service call escalation policy.
- 5.1.9.5. Do you have a guaranteed uptime? Describe your service level agreement for uptime.

**5.1.10. Warranty**

The AETF requires that a warranty be included with the proposed solution.

- 5.1.10.1. Describe the warranty offered with your proposed solution.
- 5.1.10.2. Do the same support commitments apply during the warranty period as during the maintenance contract period?



### **5.1.11. Costs**

AETF prefers a firm quote on the full website redesign, development, and hosting. Given that statement, we also want to insure a competitive bid from each potential Vendor.

If your firm prefers to provide a firm quotation covering only certain phases of this type of project, ensure that each phase is fully and clearly described and is denoted as a firm or budgetary quotation. At minimum, it is required that each Vendor provides a budgetary proposal for the full scope of the work described in this RFP.

Provide detailed pricing information for the proposed solution. Include list prices and discounted prices. Only include licenses as required for the different roles of users (administrator, view only, etc.). Break pricing down by project phases if appropriate.

#### **Services and Support Costs**

- 5.1.11.1. Implementation of Web Site Design
- 5.1.11.2. Implementation Services
- 5.1.11.3. Training Services
- 5.1.11.4. Software Support and Maintenance
- 5.1.11.5. Hourly billing rates for each job classification that will or could be utilized during the project and/or post “go-live”.
- 5.1.11.6. Other Services and Costs (Specify)

#### **Ongoing Costs**

- 5.1.11.7. Annual Hosting or Subscription Fee
- 5.1.11.8. Hourly Rates for custom development
- 5.1.11.9. Other ongoing costs

#### **Optional Costs**

- 5.1.11.10. Provide a brief description and cost associated with options provided under Section 3.10.

## **6. Submission Format and Delivery Requirements**

### **6.1. Proposal Response Delivery**

Email:  
RFP@international-data.net

Mail, courier service or hand-deliver:  
AETF Project Manager  
International Data Systems, Inc.  
(on behalf of AETF)  
401 East Fireweed Lane #202  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

### **6.2. Date and Hour of Submission**

Response must be received on or before February 14, 2021 at 5:00 pm. Any proposal that has not been received at the above address or email address by 5:00 pm on February 14, 2021, shall be disqualified from further consideration.

### **6.3. Acceptance or Rejection of Submissions**

AETF reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technicalities or irregularities and to accept any proposal it determines to be in AETF best interest. The acceptance of any proposal submission shall not in any way cause AETF to incur any liability or obligation to Vendor, financial or otherwise. AETF may cancel the RFP in whole or part without making any award at its sole discretion, without any liability being incurred by AETF to any Vendor for any expense, cost, loss, or damage incurred or suffered by the Vendor as a result of such withdrawal.

### **6.4. Costs for Document Development**

Costs for developing the response to this RFP are entirely the responsibility of the proposing party and shall not be chargeable in any manner to AETF. All Vendors agree to provide all such additional information as, and when, requested at their own expense. No Vendor in supplying such information shall be allowed to change the pricing or other cost quotations originally submitted.

### **6.5. Proposal Validity**

A proposal submitted in response to this RFP is irrevocable for 90 days from the date of submission. AETF reserves the right to withdraw a bid acceptance at any time if in the opinion of AETF the Vendor is unwilling or unable to enter into a form of contract satisfactory to AETF. Acceptance will be defined as AETF selecting you as our provider of service for the intent of negotiating a contract for services.

## **6.6. Contract Evaluation and Award**

AETF reserves the right to execute any of the following options:

- Issue no contract award for any of the services described within this RFP.
- Award all services to one Vendor.
- Issue contract awards for any combination of services and Vendor, all of part of the business as AETF sees fit.
- AETF is not obligated to accept the lowest price or most technologically advanced proposal.

AETF has no obligation to reveal the basis for contract award or to provide any information to Vendors relative to the evaluation or decision-making process. All participating Vendors will be notified promptly of bid acceptance or rejection.

## 7. Contract Negotiation and Execution

It is the intent of AETF that after the successful Vendor has been selected, AETF and the selected Vendor will enter into contract negotiations containing all terms and conditions of the proposed service. Any acceptance of a proposal is contingent upon the execution of a written contract and AETF shall not be contractually bound to any bidder prior to the execution of such written contractual agreement. The contents of the bid submitted shall become part of the contractual obligation and incorporated by reference into the ensuing contract. The contract with a successful Vendor will include penalties for non-performance and failure to meet the proposal implementation schedule.

### 7.1. Proposal Submission Certification

By submitting a proposal, Vendor certifies that he or she has carefully examined all the documents for the project and has carefully and thoroughly reviewed this RFP, and understands the nature and scope of the work to be done and the terms and conditions thereof. The Vendor further agrees that the performance time specified is a reasonable time.

### 7.2. Insurance Requirements

The acceptance of a bid proposal is contingent on Vendor providing satisfactory proof that the Vendor has adequate insurance coverage. It is in AETF sole discretion the amount of insurance coverage required for the period of work under this contract.

Vendor shall procure and maintain for the duration of the Agreement insurance against claims for injuries to persons or damages to property which may arise from or in connection with the performance of the work hereunder by the Vendor, Vendor's agents, representatives, employees or subcontractors. The cost of such insurance shall be included in the Vendor's pricing.

- A. The Vendor shall maintain in good standing the insurance noted and described in Subsection B of this section. Upon AETF's request, the Vendor shall furnish AETF with proof of such insurance.
- B. The Vendor shall provide the following insurance:
  - i. \$500,000.00 Employers Liability insurance and Workers Compensation as required by Alaska statutes.
  - ii. Commercial General Liability including:
    - i. \$2,000,000 General Aggregate
    - ii. \$2,000,000 Products/Completed Operations
    - iii. \$1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury

iv. \$1,000,000 Each Occurrence

v. \$5,000 Medical Payments

- C. The Vendor Shall provide no less than thirty (30) days advance notice to AETF prior to cancellation of any policy of insurance required by this section.
- D. With the exception of Workers Compensation, each policy shall name the Alaska Electrical Trust Fund as an additional insured, and the actual policy endorsement shall accompany the Certificate of Insurance.
- E. General liability and workers compensation policies shall be endorsed to waive all rights of subrogation against the Alaska Electrical Trust Fund, by reason of any payment made for claims under the above. The actual policy endorsement shall accompany the Certificate of Insurance.
- F. Vendor shall include all subcontractors as insured under its policies or shall furnish separate certificates and endorsements for each subcontractor. All coverage for subcontractors shall be subject to all of the requirements stated herein.

## **Appendix A: Design Collateral**

The Alaska Electrical Trust Funds (AETF) is supported by two Alaska-based labor unions, the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) Alaska Chapter and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local (IBEW) 1547. The logos for both of these unions are below, along with the letterhead for AETF, which shows how the two union logos are incorporated into the AETF look.

### **AETF Member Org: NECA**



**AETF Member Org: IBEW**



**AETF Letterhead:**



# Alaska Electrical Trust Funds

PENSION FUND – HEALTH AND WELFARE FUND – LEGAL FUND  
701 E Tudor Suite 200 • Anchorage, AK 99503  
(907) 276-1246 • (800) 478-1246 • Fax: (907) 278-7576  
[www.aetf.com](http://www.aetf.com)

