



RFP Q&A
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT & HOSTING SERVICES
ARPA FUNDS

The following is a collection of all questions submitted regarding the RFP. The questions are presented exactly as they were submitted by prospective agencies.

Q: Are there any frustrations (in the user or admin experience) or areas of disappointing performance on the current website that must be remedied with the new website?

A: Technology and online usability are evolving priorities that must be monitored and updated consistently. Our focus is always on providing a user-friendly experience by improving website efficiency and visual quality of content. A customizable and resourceful administrative interface is essential to achieving and maintaining this goal.

Q: What is the project timeline? Is there a target launch date? website?

A: See the RFP for contract dates. The website must be completely tested and operable by September 1, 2025.

Q: Does Coastal Mississippi have a photo and video library available for the project or will those be in development alongside the website project?

A: Yes.

Q: Which level of WCAG compliance is required by this scope of work? A or AA

A: AA. We strive for inclusivity and to offer the best experience for all site users.

Q: Which CRM system does Coastal Mississippi use? In what way, and to what extent will the CRM be integrated? Please offer an example of this integration, if available. website?

A: Coastal Mississippi uses Simpleview CRM software. CRM integrates with our website by pulling Tourism Partner data to develop business, subscriber, and event listings displayed on web pages or within web widgets.



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Q: Which room/attraction booking software/engines does Coastal Mississippi use? In what way, and to what extent will the book software be integrated? Please offer an example of this integration, if available.

A: Coastal Mississippi uses aRes (<https://gulfcoast.aresttravel.com/>) as an accommodation booking engine, and Bandwango (<https://www.coastalmississippi.com/plan/deals/attractions-pass/>) is the platform for purchasing our Attraction Passes.

Q: Which trip/itinerary planning system does Coastal Mississippi use? In what way, and to what extent will the trip/itinerary planning system be integrated? Please offer an example of this integration, if available.

A: Coastal Mississippi uses Simpleview ([Tripbuilder](#)). We seek recommendations and guidance from the website developer regarding the planning software and the best way to integrate it into the DMO website.

Q: Which e-commerce platforms does Coastal Mississippi use? In what way, and to what extent will these e-commerce platforms be integrated? What payment gateway does Coastal Mississippi use? Please offer an example of these integrations, if available.

A: Coastal Mississippi is open to recommendations and suggestions provided by applicants within their proposals and will be determined during contract negotiations.

Q: Which email services does Coastal Mississippi use? In what way, and to what extent will the email services be integrated?

A: Email services for potential integration include Microsoft 365 Outlook and Act-On Software. Email services are used for consumer and partner communications, automated newsletters, and messaging.

Q: Which digital advertising services does Coastal Mississippi use?

A: Coastal Mississippi has a digital sponsored content program (DTN) that offers content placements on our site. We are open to further recommendations and suggestions provided by applicants in their proposals.



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Q: What are Coastal Mississippi's expectations regarding the integration of analytic measurement tools for the new site? What KPIs must be tracked?

- A:
- a. Conversions/events
 - b. Engagement
 - c. Reach
 - d. Bookings

The website must be configured to track digital marketing efforts and GA4 analytics. Recommendations for attribution are encouraged.

Q: Which social media platforms does Coastal Mississippi use? In what way does Coastal Mississippi want to integrate its social media content with the new website? Please offer an example of this/these integration(s), if available.

A: Coastal Mississippi utilizes various social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Pinterest, X) that provide potential collaborative opportunities for user-generated content, etc., on our website.

Q: What is Coastal Mississippi's definition of "microsite"? For example, do these microsites live on a subdomain of the primary domain and utilize a separate design theme and page templates, or are they simply a subset group of pages that are not a part of the primary site navigation?

A: A microsite can either be a single web page or a cluster of pages developed to inform and attract user engagement. Coastal Mississippi's current microsites are a subset of pages. These pages utilize a separate design theme, specifically in terms of navigation. However, the use of subdomains and the capability to create alternative page templates may be applicable in the future.

Q: What is the function of these microsites? To promote events, to act as digital campaign landing pages, etc.?

A: Coastal Mississippi currently employs microsites for sales development services related to meetings/conventions, events, and sports events. Future microsite development could potentially include digital campaigns or additional DMO initiatives to promote awareness of the destination and its resources.



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Q: Please provide examples of Coastal Mississippi's existing microsites, if available.

A: <https://www.coastalmississippi.com/meetings/> or <https://www.coastalmississippi.com/sports/>

Q: What specific CRM systems are you considering for integration?

A: Simpleview CRM software or other.

Q: What data points do you want to flow between the CRM and your website?

A: CRM integrates with our website by pulling Tourism Partner data to develop business and event listings displayed on web pages or within web widgets. Various data points between the CRM and the website include business/event descriptions, times, addresses, websites, email addresses, amenity data, etc.

Q: To ensure a smooth user experience, will bookings for events, places to stay, restaurants be handled directly on your website, or will users be redirected to another platform to complete the booking process? Also do we need to consider redesigning of <https://gulfcoast.arestravel.com> as well? As for some of the pages in your current website user is navigated to this site for bookings.

A: Event, restaurant, and accommodation listings include the websites of their respective organizations to redirect those interests and confirm bookings. However, Coastal Mississippi does utilize the aRes booking engine via the website widget to aid in securing online reservations.

aRes provides a widget code to be embedded within the CNAME record. This subdomain page design must reflect the final redesign and any pertinent brand elements of the Coastal Mississippi website.

Q: What specific functionalities do you require for the enhanced meeting planner tools, such as the ability to integrate floor plans, searchable meeting venues, and the creation of microsites? Additionally, how would you like users to use the floor plan and microsites? We assume that it will be static images. Please confirm.

A: Coastal Mississippi seeks guidance from web developers to offer recommendations for advanced planner tools. Recommendations on the best options for display and interactive floor plans are desired. See the example for searchable meeting venues and microsites: [Find Your Venue \(coastalmississippi.com\)](https://www.coastalmississippi.com)



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Q: Could you please share more details on the below 3rd party platform that you want to integrate

- a. Digital Marketing platforms
- b. Booking Engines for rooms and attractions
- c. e-Commerce
- d. Reservations
- e. Trip Planning
- f. Itinerary Building

A: Coastal Mississippi is open to recommendations and suggestions provided by applicants within their proposals. Below is our current 3rd-party platform usage:

- a. Digital Marketing platforms - DTN
- b. Booking Engines for rooms and attractions – aREs (rooms) & Bandwango (attractions)
- c. e-Commerce – Interested in eCommerce (shopping cart) for product sales
- d. Reservations – Restaurant reservation software integration
- e. Trip Planning – Tripbuilder
- f. Itinerary Building – Integrate software (best platform recommendations)

Q: Can you please confirm if the "Supplemental terms" file provided is what is meant by the "Standard Contract" mentioned on page 8 of the RFP document. If not, please provide a copy of the actual "Standard Contract" to us.

A: Coastal Mississippi follows all federal and State of Mississippi procurement laws. Refer to the [Request for Proposal](#).

Q: On page 3 Section 4d, can you please elaborate which CRM system you are needing us to integrate to? Also, which email service do we need to integrate to?

A: Simpleview CRM software or other. Email services for potential integration include Microsoft 365 Outlook and Act-On Software.

Q: Coastal Mississippi is a current client of ours for our Web accessibility tool AudioEye. AudioEye will integrate best with our Website platform. That being said, was there a driving factor or motivating event that led your team to adopt our accessibility tool? We ask this question to find out if accessibility has been a challenge for your team in the past.

A: The site must be ADA and WGAC-compliant.



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Q: What CRM is Coastal Mississippi using, and at what pricing tier?

A: Coastal Mississippi uses Simpleview CRM software. The CRM pricing tier is not relevant to the website design and hosting request.

Q: How many users do you typically see in a year? What is the total number of users for the highest and lowest months?

A: 150,000–500,000 per month (web attribution)

Q: Referencing accessibility — will you need to meet WCAG 2 guidelines or WCAG 3?

A: Coastal Mississippi has not yet determined which version of accessibility to employ; however, the standard of WCAG 2 Level AA conformance is a minimal requirement.

Q: The RFP states, “Enhanced Meeting Planner Tools: Integrate floor plans, searchable meeting venues, and microsites.” Is this referencing planning for conferences, events, etc., or other purposes?

A: Yes. Coastal Mississippi offers sales development services that include events, meetings/conferences, and sporting events. These tools should help sell Coastal Mississippi meeting space available to planners.

Q: For listings and events: does Coastal Mississippi currently enter all the listings internally, or do local businesses/partners assist?

A: Both. Coastal Mississippi may enter data into the CRM to establish Tourism Partner accounts, business listings, etc. We also offer our multitude of Tourism Partners an Extranet portal so they may adequately maintain their respective listings. Event listings can also be submitted via a web form. Any submissions or updates made outside of the DMO require approval within the CRM platform by a DMO official.

Q: Do you have brand messaging and a brand voice?

A: Yes.



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Q: Who will be responsible for new content for the new website?

A: Coastal Mississippi Marketing Team

Q: What CMS are you using today?

A: Simpleview

Q: Do you prefer any CMS over others?

A: The CMS should marry with our CRM system and support advanced functions/integrations associated with the top DMO websites.

Q: Will the new website CMS include the event registration? If not, what will you use for event registration?

A: NA

Q: Is there an incumbent for this contract? If so, please provide the incumbent name, current contract number, duration, historical level of effort, and value of the contract.

A: Simpleview is the current provider. The remaining information is available through a public records request.

Q: Can you share insight into pain points from a customer/user and admin perspective as they relate to the current website?

A: Technology and online usability are evolving priorities that must be monitored and updated consistently. Our focus is always on providing a user-friendly experience by improving website efficiency and visual quality of content. A customizable and resourceful administrative interface is essential to achieving and maintaining this goal.

Q: What do you currently spend annually on website maintenance, support, and enhancements?

A: NA

Q: When was the website last redesigned? How long has the current website been in maintenance mode? Who is in charge of administering the current website?

A: Uncertain. The Coastal Mississippi Marketing Team maintains the website.



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Q: What are the primary challenges and pain points with the current coastalmississippi.com website that you would like to address with the new website development?

A: Technology and online usability are evolving priorities that must be monitored and updated consistently. Our focus is always on providing a user-friendly experience by improving website efficiency and visual quality of content. A customizable and resourceful administrative interface is essential to achieving and maintaining this goal.

Q: Are there any existing user personas or customer journey maps available that we can use as a reference for designing and developing the new website?

A: We utilize current GA4 and other research platforms to gather visitor data.

Q: Can you clarify the extent of marketing responsibilities within the scope of this project? Who is in charge of the authority's current online marketing efforts?

A: See RFP for Scope of Work.

Q: Are there specific tools for marketing campaigns that need to be integrated or supported by the website development efforts?

A: Seeking recommendations from website developers.

Q: Are there any specific CMS platform preferences for the new website? If yes, please provide details.

A: The CMS should marry with our CRM system and support advanced functions/integrations associated with the top DMO websites.

Q: Are there any existing customizations, integrations, or third-party application/s within the current CMS that should be considered for the new website?

A: We recommend reading the scope of work in the RFP and studying our current website.

Q: Are there specific hosting requirements or preferences, such as hosting providers or configurations?

A: No.



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Q: What is the current website traffic?

A: Varies seasonally; 150,000-500,000 per month.

Q: Have you had instances of sudden traffic surges in the past?

A: Yes.

Q: What percentage of your current website traffic comes from mobile devices?

A: Over 75%

Q: Does the department anticipate any significant growth in website traffic or content volume any time soon?

A: Yes.

Q: What are the specific training requirements for Coastal Mississippi staff in terms of using the CMS and managing content?

A: Coastal Mississippi staff will be trained on the platform and expects ongoing training, knowledge bases or on-demand training, and continued support.

Q: Could you detail the expected duration and specific types of support and maintenance services required post-launch?

A: Coastal Mississippi staff will be trained on the platform and expects ongoing training, knowledge bases, or on-demand training, and continued support. The web developer will provide continued maintenance to ensure the site performs properly and installs any required updates.

Q: Can you provide more details on the scope of content migration, including the volume of content and types of media that will need to be transferred?

A: Assume all content and media from the current site will be migrated or uploaded.

Q: Are there existing brand guidelines or visual style guides available that we can use as a reference for designing and developing the new website?

A: Yes.



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Q: Is there a specific budget range allocated for this project?

A: The specific budget will be negotiated based on the proposals.

Q: Is multi-language support a requirement for the website?

A: Customer support should be fluent in English.

Q: Please specify the types of maintenance activities you anticipate being most necessary. (e.g., ADA compliance, SEO, performance optimization, bug fixes, plugin upgrades, template adjustments, content issues, etc.)

A: The developer should provide continued support for ADA compliance, bug fixes, plugin upgrades, template adjustments, and overall design and maintenance of the site.

Q: Is an existing issue-tracking system in place (such as JIRA or Bugherd)?

A: An issue tracking is currently managed through the Simpleview platform.

Q: The RFP states: Conduct a comprehensive audit of coastalmississippi.com and additional microsities and landing pages to analyze the overall effectiveness and address the current limitations. Which additional landing pages and microsities are you referring to in the given scope of work? Could you please share their url?

A: All pages and microsities currently on the [Coastal Mississippi website](#).

Q: Could you please provide information regarding the budget for this project?

A: No assigned budget is in place. Budget negotiations will be based on proposals.

Q: Will local or in-state agencies be given preference?

A: Coastal Mississippi follows federal procurement guidelines.

Q: When was the website last redesigned?

A: Uncertain.



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Q: Is there a preference on what CMS will be used for the redesigned website?

A: The CMS should marry with our CRM system and support advanced functions/integrations associated with the top DMO websites.

Q: What is your "not to exceed" budget?

A: This has not been established.

Q: What is your yearly maintenance budget?

A: The yearly budget will be determined by the maintenance and support provided.

Q: How many pages from the current website, if any, will be migrated to the new website?

A: Assume all pages will be migrated.

Q: Will there be any 3rd party applications that need to be integrated into the website? If so, please provide which applications will be integrated.

A: See RFP.