Request for Proposal - NCDP New Website

Bid Open: March 22, 2021
Bid Close: April 22, 2021
Submit proposals to ncdpweb@columbia.edu

The National Center for Disaster Preparedness, Columbia University, is seeking bids for a full website redesign. Bidders should be competent in discussing hosting platforms, include full-stack development capabilities, providing SEO guidance, and highly experienced in project management to launch a redesigned and transitioned website.

https://ncdp.columbia.edu/

Background
The current NCDP website is built on a custom theme in WordPress. The NCDP is pleased with the current site’s design, features, and user experience however, due to technical limitations, including the lack of a responsive template, we would like to refresh the site.

NCDP Overview
The National Center for Disaster Preparedness (NCDP) at Columbia University’s Earth Institute is an academically based, interdisciplinary center focused on the nation’s capacity to prevent, respond to, and recover from disasters. NCDP’s approach combines research, policy, education, and high-level advocacy to ensure that the best thinking — and best practices — become part of our national disaster preparedness and recovery systems.

NCDP research reflects a particular interest in resilience and vulnerability at the level of individuals, communities, and society. NCDP provides rapid-response research in an emergency—and is one of the few centers worldwide that have also conducted longitudinal research on populations affected by disasters. NCDP plays a critical role in policy development and raising awareness of disaster preparedness and planning issues that are “under the radar.” Supporting the practice community is a vital part of NCDP’s mission: The Center has trained over 100,000 responders and decision-makers through a separately managed but linked, Learning Management System. In a disaster or public health emergency, NCDP serves as a trusted source of information to the media and the public and has an active social media presence.
Website Audiences

NCDP’s target audiences, in no particular order, are included below. Frequent visitors include:

- Academia and other research institutions
- Emergency management and disaster response workforce
- Governmental agencies
- Non-profit and community-based organizations
- Policymakers
- Individuals and families, and general population seeking information and tools on disaster preparedness, resilience, and response
- Private sector organization interested in business continuity, resilience, and response
- Media and journalists

New Website Goals

Goal 1: Grow our reach as an authoritative resource.

**Objective:** Providing content that highlights NCDP’s focuses, expertise, and commentary regularly by establishing trust, credibility, and authority to audiences.

**Functional areas of the website include:**

- In the News
- In Focus news updates
- Publications & press release database
- NCDP Perspectives blog
- Featured Work
- Project-specific & thematic microsites (e.g., ComEd, PRRI, FEMA, RCRC, and more)
**Goal 2: Provide brand awareness to the programs and services that NCDP researches and delivers.**

**Objective:** Showcase NCDP focuses areas to show the breadth of reach of research, practice, policy, projects, and personnel.

**Focus areas include:**
- Policy and advocacy
- Applied research
- Children health and disasters
- Vulnerable populations
- Climate change and impacts and adaptation
- Recovery and resiliency
- Workforce readiness
- Preparedness attitudes and behaviors
- System readiness and response
- Drills and exercises
- Community planning and outreach
- Consulting

**Goal 3: Serve as an information hub to existing and potential audiences.**

**Objective:** Drive traffic to online training and education and preparedness tools.

**Tools & Information may include:**
- FEMA web-based training courses, [https://www.ncdpcourses.org/](https://www.ncdpcourses.org/)
- FEMA onsite training courses
- Preparedness tools
- Mapping and GIS applications
- An example interactive tool on an NCDP managed site: [RCRC Issue Briefs](https://ncdp.givenow.columbia.edu/)

**Goal 4: Allow donors to contribute to support initiatives.**

**Objective:** Provide a portal to Give Now for programs: [https://ncdp.givenow.columbia.edu/](https://ncdp.givenow.columbia.edu/)

**Areas include:**
- Pandemic Resource Response Initiative (PRRI), [https://ncdp.givenow.columbia.edu/](https://ncdp.givenow.columbia.edu/)
- Various disaster recovery programs with a philanthropic focus
Website Requirements

- **Server & Administrative Functions**
  - Responsive template
  - Optimized for speed, i.e., caching or CDN solution
  - Staging and production site
  - Secure hosting solution and cyberattack prevention
  - User management
  - Scheduled backups, incremental, and full-on a regular schedule
  - Simple maintenance to include the latest PHP or other server software

- **Features**
  - Capability for social media integration
  - Intelligent search functionality across the site and uploaded files
  - Microsites - ability to launch project-specific or topic-specific sites within the main site, or other similar solution to cleanly organize and manage non-core content
  - Ability to quickly add new announcements, photos, and featured work
  - Call-to-actions (CTAs) to provide more engagement with content
  - Newsletter integration and sign-up/opt-in (e.g., FEMA Training Newsletter through Constant Contact)
  - Provide API integrations for publications (e.g., Academic Commons managed by Columbia University Libraries)
  - Faculty and staff page – include an affiliation link, CV upload, staff picture, and role
  - Create or embed video library and integrate with video from sources such as YouTube or Vimeo with lightbox display
  - Manage media mentions - “In the News” – organize media hits that can be searched by date. Open to other recommended best practices for this functionality.
  - Provide back-up, previous page retrieval (i.e., page versioning), and archive ability
  - Provide redirect links for popular pages as defined
  - Contain blog(s) – this would align to our current “NCDP Perspectives” - [https://ncdp.columbia.edu/ncdp-perspectives/](https://ncdp.columbia.edu/ncdp-perspectives/)
  - Capability to support multiple blogs with different visual layouts through topic tagging
  - Provide contact information in the footer and/or up top
  - URL forwarding from critical pages and resources from old to the new site
  - Ability to self-manage addition of new content after launch
  - Content library
  - Functionality to allow file server access to upload custom content such as Articulate HTML5 presentation

- **SEO**
  - Integrate with Google Analytics
  - SEO friendly and contain Yoast or tool similar
  - Contain structured data mark-up for top primary pages identified

- **UX/UI**
  - Visually appealing and easy to navigate
• Follow similar branding and style as current site – but open to re-design
• Showcase social media icons
• Contains a sticky header to showcase items
• Contain an expanded footer - the footer can contain items that are not part of the main navigation
• Custom landing page and portal design for major domains of interest

Project Management

• Project management of the website launch through all phases from design to implementation (NCDP would obtain ownership in the maintenance phase after the new website is launched)
• The vendor will provide clear milestones, production schedule, and work closely with the NCDP communications team
• The vendor selected will guide NCDP on best practices from visual concepts to technical implementation. Technical documentation will be created when deemed necessary by NCDP.
• The vendor will assist in transferring media assets and content from the existing website into the new template as pages are identified.
• The vendor will conduct thorough QA/QC and cross-platform testing
• The vendor will provide a guarantee for a specific period of time after launch

Time and Budget

NCDP will begin the planning stage of the new website in the Spring 2021 with an anticipated soft launch by the end of Summer 2021 and a hard launch by Fall 2021. It is requested that components in the proposal be itemized by time and cost. The vendor is encouraged to provide up to three pricing options in the bid. NCDP will maintain the content of the website after the “Go Live” launch; however, a separate contract will be requested after the warranty period for maintenance, security updates, and other back-end programming updates or custom requests. Please provide at least two references in the proposal.

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