

FOR NONPROFITS AND ASSOCIATIONS

How to Write a Website RFP That Attracts the Right Vendors

A working template and field guide, with examples drawn from dozens of nonprofit website RFPs we've reviewed at 83 Creative.

Victor Adams

Principal, 83 Creative

83creative.com

CONTENTS

What's in this guide

	A note from Victor	3
	Five things most nonprofit website RFPs get wrong	4
	What to do before you write the RFP	5
	The template, section by section	6
1	Cover	7
2	At a glance	8
3	About [Your Organization]	9
4	Project background	10
5	Project goals	11
6	Audiences	12
7	Scope of work	13
8	Out of scope	14
9	Technical requirements	15
10	Design direction	16
11	Deliverables	17
12	Timeline	18
13	Budget	19
14	Proposal requirements	20
15	Evaluation criteria	21
16	Submission instructions	22
17	Appendices	23
	Three preset evaluation weighting schemes	24
	Frequently asked vendor questions	25
	A final ask — free 30-minute RFP review	26

A NOTE FROM

Victor Adams, Principal at 83 Creative

The single most useful thing we can tell you about writing a website RFP is this: **the document is for the vendor, not for you.**

Most of the RFPs we receive at 83 Creative read like internal planning notes — wishlists, recaps of staff meetings, hopes phrased as requirements. The good ones do something different. They give a vendor enough context to write a serious, scoped proposal in one pass, and enough constraints to make the proposal comparable to the four or five others you'll receive.

We've reviewed dozens of nonprofit website RFPs over the past few years — and helped clients write theirs from scratch when they asked. This template is the structure we recommend most often. It's not exhaustive. It's a working starting point. Edit it, cut what doesn't apply, add what we missed.

Two practical asks before you start:

- **Disclose your budget.** Even a range. Vendors will price proposals to your number whether you share it or not — disclosing it just means the proposals you get are designed to fit. Hidden budgets produce scattered bids and waste everyone's time, including yours.
- **Name your decision-maker.** Not the committee. The person who, when push comes to shove, picks the vendor. That person should be the one drafting evaluation criteria, even if others weigh in.

That's it. The template starts on the next page. Use it freely.

— Victor Adams, Principal, 83 Creative

DIAGNOSTICS

Five things most nonprofit website RFPs get wrong

These show up so consistently that fixing any one of them puts you ahead of the field.

1 No budget disclosed

"We're seeking proposals" without a number forces every vendor to guess. You'll get bids ranging from \$8K to \$80K for the same scope, and you'll spend interview rounds trying to figure out who you're actually talking to. Disclose a range. "\$30,000–\$50,000" is fine. So is "around \$25,000."

2 A wishlist with no priorities

When the scope says AI integration *and* multilingual *and* member portal *and* event calendar *and* CRM integration *and* podcast hosting, vendors can't tell what's load-bearing versus aspirational, so they pad to cover everything. Rank your priorities. "These three are non-negotiable; these four are nice-to-have if budget allows."

3 Brand vision without brand assets

"We want a modern, calm, trustworthy aesthetic" gives a vendor nothing concrete. Attach your brand guide if you have one. If you don't, list 3–5 websites whose look-and-feel you like, with one sentence on what you like about each. That single page does more than three paragraphs of adjectives.

4 Evaluation criteria that aren't weighted

Listing seven criteria with no weights implies they're equal — which they never are. If price matters more than design polish, say so. If experience with your sector matters more than experience with your stack, say so. Weighted criteria force you to be honest about what you actually care about.

5 Buried logistics

The submission deadline, contact email, time zone, and Q&A process should be on page one or page two, not on page nine. Vendors read RFPs in coffee shops at 11 PM. Make the key facts findable.

PREPARATION

What to do before you write the RFP

Twenty minutes of internal alignment saves a week of confused back-and-forth later.

- **Agree on the goal in one sentence.** Not "redesign the website." Something like "make it easier for donors to give monthly" or "give our program team a way to update event pages without engineering help."
- **Get a number from your board.** Even a rough one. The conversation gets exponentially easier once you know whether you're in \$10K territory or \$100K territory.
- **List your current integrations.** CRM, email marketing, donation platform, event registration, analytics. The exact products, not categories. "Bloomerang" beats "our CRM."
- **Find your brand assets.** Logo files, brand guide if one exists, three to five sites you admire. If none of these exist, that's useful for a vendor to know upfront too.
- **Decide who decides.** Name the person who'll make the final call, and the people whose input that person will weigh. Vendors will ask. Better to have the answer ready.

When the answers to those five exist, you're ready to write. The annotated template starts on the next page.

SECTION 1

Cover

WHAT THIS IS FOR

The first page a vendor sees. Establishes who you are, what you're hiring for, when proposals are due, and how to reach you. Should be readable in 15 seconds.

STRONG EXAMPLE

Request for Proposals: Website Redesign
Lakeshore Conservancy · lakeshoreconservancy.org
Issued: April 1, 2026 · Proposals due: May 6, 2026 at 5:00 PM ET
Primary contact: Jamie Chen, Director of Communications · jamie@lakeshoreconservancy.org

WEAK EXAMPLE

RFP for Website
Lakeshore Conservancy
Due in May

The weak version forces a vendor to dig for basic facts that should be on the first page.

TEMPLATE COPY

Request for Proposals: Website Redesign
[Your Organization Name] · [yourdomain.org]
Issued: [Date] · Proposals due: [Date and time, with time zone]
Primary contact: [Name, Title] · [email@yourdomain.org]

SECTION 2

At a glance

WHAT THIS IS FOR

A one-paragraph summary that lets a vendor decide in 30 seconds whether they want to read further. Include the four things they need most: who you are, what you want, your budget range, and your timeline.

STRONG EXAMPLE

Lakeshore Conservancy is a regional land trust protecting 4,200 acres across three counties. We're hiring a vendor to redesign and rebuild lakeshoreconservancy.org with an emphasis on supporting our membership program and our interactive trails map. Budget range: \$40,000–\$60,000. Proposals due May 6; vendor selected by May 22; launch target October 2026.

WEAK EXAMPLE

We are seeking a partner to help us redesign our website and would appreciate proposals from qualified firms. Please see below for details.

The weak version makes a vendor read the next four pages to figure out whether they should even be reading at all.

TEMPLATE COPY

[Your Organization Name] is [one sentence on what you do]. We're hiring a vendor to [primary outcome — "redesign and rebuild," "rebuild on a modern platform," "create from scratch," etc.] [yourdomain.org] with an emphasis on [the two or three things that matter most]. Budget range: [\$X–\$Y]. Proposals due [date]; vendor selected by [date]; launch target [date].

SECTION 3

About [Your Organization]

WHAT THIS IS FOR

Context. Vendors write better proposals when they understand who you serve and why. Answers: who are you, what do you do, why does it matter, and who do you serve?

STRONG EXAMPLE

Lakeshore Conservancy was founded in 1987 to protect undeveloped land along the western shore of Lake Michigan. We are a 501(c)(3) regional land trust with 14 staff and an annual budget of \$3.2M. We own and manage 4,200 acres across three counties, hold conservation easements on another 6,800 acres, and operate seven public trail systems with 124 miles of marked trails.

Our mission is to protect ecologically significant land in our region and connect people to it. Our work serves three constituencies: members and donors who fund the work; hikers, families, and visitors who use the trails; and landowners and partner agencies who collaborate with us on easements and stewardship.

WEAK EXAMPLE

Lakeshore Conservancy is a nonprofit dedicated to conservation in our region. We have been serving the community for many years and are passionate about our mission.

The weak version is generic enough to belong to any nonprofit. The strong version gives a vendor specific facts they can design around.

TEMPLATE COPY

[Your Organization Name] was founded in [year] to [original mission]. We are a [501(c)(3) / 501(c)(6) / association / other] with [staff size] and an annual budget of [\$X]. [One or two more sentences with specifics: programs run, people served, geographic reach.]

Our mission: [Mission statement.]

Who we serve: [List your primary audiences — donors, members, beneficiaries, partners — with one specific descriptor for each.]

SECTION 4

Project background

WHAT THIS IS FOR

Where the current website is, why it isn't working, and what's driving the timing of this project. A vendor reading this should understand the gap between today and what you need.

STRONG EXAMPLE

Our current website (lakeshoreconservancy.org) was launched in 2018 on WordPress with a custom theme. The site has served us reasonably for membership conversion but breaks down in three places: our trails map is built on a third-party service that's been deprecated and now displays "service unavailable" intermittently; the event calendar requires engineering help to update, which has effectively meant program staff stop posting events; and the donate page sends donors offsite to a hosted Donorbox form, breaking the giving flow.

Two things are forcing the timing. First, the trails map needs replacement before our 2026 hiking season opens in April. Second, we're launching a major membership campaign in fall 2026 and want the new site live to support it.

WEAK EXAMPLE

Our current website is outdated and no longer meets our needs. We are looking to refresh our online presence.

"Outdated" can't be scoped. "Trails map breaks intermittently, event calendar can't be updated by program staff, donate flow ships users offsite" can.

TEMPLATE COPY

Our current website is [domain]. It was [launched / last redesigned] in [year] on [platform, if known]. The site [what works about it today, in one sentence].

The reason we're investing in a redesign now is [list 2–4 specific problems or opportunities — broken functionality, performance issues, brand evolution, upcoming campaign or program launch, regulatory requirement, accessibility gap, etc.].

The timing is driven by [external event or deadline that explains why this is happening this year].

SECTION 5

Project goals

WHAT THIS IS FOR

Three to five outcomes the new website needs to achieve. Goals are outcomes, not deliverables. "Increase monthly donor conversion by 30%" is a goal. "Build a new donate page" is a deliverable. Vendors design differently for outcomes.

STRONG EXAMPLE

1. Grow our online membership base by 25% in the 12 months after launch.
2. Cut the time program staff spend updating event pages from hours to minutes.
3. Make the trails map reliable enough that we can market it as a primary feature.
4. Pass WCAG 2.1 AA conformance, validated by independent audit before launch.

WEAK EXAMPLE

Modern design. Easy to update. Accessible. Mobile-friendly. Fast. SEO-optimized.

A list of qualities every website should have isn't a goal list — it's a baseline expectation list.

TEMPLATE COPY

The new website needs to achieve the following outcomes, listed in order of priority:

1. [Most important outcome, stated specifically — include a number or measurable signal if you can]
2. [Next outcome]
3. [Next outcome]
4. [Optional]
5. [Optional]

SECTION 6

Audiences

WHAT THIS IS FOR

Who the site is for, in enough detail that a vendor can picture a real person when designing. Two or three primary audiences is usually right; more than four tends to mean nobody is well-served.

STRONG EXAMPLE

Primary audiences:

- **Recurring monthly donors aged 45–70**, most of whom give \$25–\$100 per month. They visit the site to update payment info, find tax receipts, and read program updates.
- **Trail visitors planning a hike**, often on mobile, often within 24 hours of visiting. They need the trails map, parking info, trailhead status, and dog policy.
- **Local landowners considering an easement**, typically aged 60+, often visiting from a partner-organization referral. They need a clear path to "talk to someone" without commitment.

WEAK EXAMPLE

Donors, members, volunteers, community members, partners, and the general public.

A glossary of nonprofit stakeholder types isn't an audience definition. Describe real people a vendor could design for.

TEMPLATE COPY

Primary audiences (the people the site needs to serve well):

- **[Audience 1]:** [one sentence describing who they are, what they want from the site, how often they visit]
- **[Audience 2]:** [same]
- **[Audience 3]:** [same — optional]

Secondary audiences (people we want to support without optimizing for):

- [Short list — these don't need full descriptions]

SECTION 7

Scope of work

WHAT THIS IS FOR

What the vendor is hired to do. Bulleted, concrete, and as specific as you can make it. The clearer the scope, the less padding in proposals.

STRONG EXAMPLE

The selected vendor will be responsible for:

- Discovery and planning, including stakeholder interviews with up to six internal staff
- Information architecture and sitemap, with one round of revisions
- Visual design for desktop and mobile, with two rounds of revisions
- Frontend and backend development on WordPress
- Migration of approximately 180 content pages and 600 blog posts
- Integration with Bloomerang (CRM), Mailchimp (email), Donorbox (donations), Google Analytics 4
- WCAG 2.1 AA conformance, validated by independent audit before launch
- QA on current versions of Chrome, Safari, Firefox, Edge
- Staff training (one session, two hours, recorded)
- 60 days of post-launch support for bug fixes

WEAK EXAMPLE

The selected vendor will design and develop a modern, accessible website.

That's not scope — it's a project description. Vendors will assume the worst case for every undefined element.

TEMPLATE COPY

The selected vendor will be responsible for:

- **Discovery and planning** — [stakeholder interviews, content audit, analytics review, etc.]
- **Information architecture and design** — [wireframes, sitemap, visual design, revision rounds]
- **Development** — [platform if preferred, frontend and backend, custom functionality]
- **Content migration** — [approximate page/post count, who handles cleanup]
- **Integrations** — [named third-party platforms]
- **Accessibility** — [WCAG version and conformance level, whether independent audit required]
- **Performance and SEO** — [specific targets or vendor recommendation]
- **QA and testing** — [browsers, devices, accessibility validation]
- **Training and documentation** — [number of sessions, format]
- **Post-launch support** — [duration and type]

SECTION 8

Out of scope

WHAT THIS IS FOR

A short list of things a vendor might assume are in scope but aren't. This single section saves more confusion than almost any other. Skip only if everything reasonable is in scope.

STRONG EXAMPLE

The following are not part of this engagement:

- Brand identity development. Our logo, color palette, and typography are set; we'll provide brand assets.
- Original photography. We have a photo library; we'll commission new shots separately if needed.
- Copywriting from scratch. Existing content will be migrated and lightly edited; we'll handle major rewrites in-house.
- Hosting fees, third-party platform subscriptions, and domain registration. These are paid directly by us.

WEAK EXAMPLE

(Section omitted entirely.)

Without an out-of-scope list, half the proposals will quote you for things you'd planned to do internally.

TEMPLATE COPY

The following are not part of this engagement:

- [Item — e.g., brand identity development if your brand is set]
- [Item — e.g., original photography or video if you have assets or will source separately]
- [Item — e.g., copywriting if your team is writing content]
- [Item — e.g., third-party platform subscriptions or hosting fees if you'll pay them directly]
- [Item — any other commonly-assumed-included scope you're keeping internal]

SECTION 9

Technical requirements

WHAT THIS IS FOR

Platform, integrations, accessibility, performance, security, and hosting constraints. Be specific where you have preferences; be honest where you don't.

STRONG EXAMPLE

Platform: WordPress strongly preferred. Open to alternatives if there's a compelling reason, but the burden of proof is on the vendor.

Integrations: Bloomerang (CRM, via REST API), Mailchimp (email, via embedded form), Donorbox (donations, via embed), GA4, Google Tag Manager.

Accessibility: WCAG 2.1 AA, validated by independent audit. All Level A and Level AA findings must be resolved before launch.

Performance: PageSpeed 80+ on mobile for the homepage and top-level templates. Core Web Vitals passing on all three at launch.

Hosting: Open to vendor-recommended hosting. Preference for managed WordPress (WP Engine, Kinsta, Pantheon). We pay hosting directly under our own account.

Security: HTTPS site-wide. SSO via Google Workspace for admin. Daily off-site backups.

WEAK EXAMPLE

The site must be modern, secure, and accessible.

Three nouns. Not a requirement set.

TEMPLATE COPY

Platform: [Preference and reason, or "vendor recommendation."]

Integrations: [Named products, not categories.]

Accessibility: [WCAG version, conformance level, audit requirements.]

Performance: [Targets or "vendor recommendation."]

Hosting: [Preference, who pays, who owns the account.]

Security: [Specific requirements — HTTPS, SSO, backups, PII handling, compliance.]

SECTION 10

Design direction

WHAT THIS IS FOR

Helps a vendor understand the visual world you want to live in. Concrete references beat adjectives every time.

STRONG EXAMPLE

Our brand is conservation-grounded, warm, and human. We want a site that feels like the kind of place you'd want to take a walk through — calm, photography-driven, generous with white space.

Brand assets attached as Appendix A: logo files, color palette (deep green #1F4D2C, sand #E8DCC4, soft cream), and typography (Source Serif Pro / Source Sans Pro).

Three sites we admire:

- **theconservationfund.org** — clarity of mission-to-action paths
- **nature.org** — generous photography without feeling slick
- **midpenopenspace.org** — trails map UX

One thing to avoid: stock-photo aesthetic.

WEAK EXAMPLE

We want a modern, professional, warm, and trustworthy design that reflects our mission.

Five adjectives every nonprofit uses. No designer can do anything with this.

TEMPLATE COPY

Brand assets: [Attached / available on request / not yet developed.]

Visual direction: [A few sentences. Specific is better than abstract.]

Sites we admire:

- [URL] — [what specifically you like]
- [URL] — [what specifically you like]
- [URL] — [what specifically you like]

Sites or aesthetics to avoid: [Optional but useful.]

SECTION 11

Deliverables

WHAT THIS IS FOR

What the vendor leaves you with at the end — both digital artifacts and supporting materials. Distinct from scope of work: scope is what the vendor does; deliverables are what you have at the end.

STRONG EXAMPLE

At the end of the engagement, we expect to have:

- A fully functional, launched website at our existing domain
- Source code in a repository we own (GitHub: @lakeshoreconservancy)
- All design files in Figma, transferred to our team
- A staff training session recording and a written CMS quick-reference (PDF, 4–8 pages)
- An accessibility audit report from the independent auditor
- A 30/60/90-day post-launch support log

WEAK EXAMPLE

A new website.

A vendor who reads this assumes you'll be grateful for whatever they hand you.

TEMPLATE COPY

At the end of the engagement, we expect to receive:

- [The live site]
- [Source code — where it lives, who owns the repo]
- [Design files — format and handoff method]
- [Training materials and documentation]
- [Accessibility audit report, if applicable]
- [Post-launch support log, if applicable]

SECTION 12

Timeline

WHAT THIS IS FOR

When things happen, end to end. Include both the procurement timeline (questions, proposals, selection) and the project timeline (kickoff, milestones, launch). A vendor can't tell whether they're available without dates.

STRONG EXAMPLE

MILESTONE	DATE
RFP issued	April 1, 2026
Vendor questions due	April 15, 2026
Proposals due	May 6, 2026 at 5:00 PM ET
Finalist interviews	May 13–17, 2026
Vendor selected	May 22, 2026
Kickoff	June 3, 2026
Site launch	October 15, 2026

WEAK EXAMPLE

We are hoping to launch this fall.

A vendor can't check their calendar against this. They'll either lowball with assumptions or pad with insurance.

TEMPLATE COPY

Include a table with: RFP issued, questions due, answers posted, proposals due (with time zone), finalist interviews, vendor selected, contract signed/kickoff, discovery complete, design approval, development complete, site launch, post-launch support concludes.

SECTION 13

Budget

WHAT THIS IS FOR

A range, disclosed. This is the single highest-leverage section in the RFP. Hidden budgets produce scattered bids; disclosed budgets produce proposals designed to fit. Disclose.

STRONG EXAMPLE

Our budget for this engagement is **\$40,000–\$60,000**, with a target landing around **\$50,000**. The range reflects flexibility on scope — if a vendor recommends a higher-end approach that delivers measurably more value, we want to hear about it. If a vendor can hit the priority outcomes at the low end, we want to hear about that too.

Budget covers all work in the scope-of-work section. It does not cover hosting fees, third-party platform subscriptions, or post-launch maintenance beyond the 60 days included.

WEAK EXAMPLE

Please propose a budget appropriate to the scope.

This produces bids of \$8,000 and bids of \$80,000 in the same inbox. The vendors you actually want will skip the bid entirely.

TEMPLATE COPY

Our budget for this engagement is **[\$X–\$Y]**, with a target landing around **[\$Z]**. [One or two sentences on flexibility at the top and bottom of the range.]

Budget covers all work in the scope-of-work section. It does not cover [list excluded categories — hosting, third-party subscriptions, post-launch maintenance, internal staff time].

SECTION 14

Proposal requirements

WHAT THIS IS FOR

What you want vendors to send you. Keep this short. Long requirements lists scare off the firms you actually want; the best vendors won't write a 40-page proposal on spec.

STRONG EXAMPLE

Please submit a proposal of no more than 15 pages including:

1. Firm overview — who you are, team size, where you're based
2. Relevant experience — three to five examples of comparable projects, ideally with nonprofit clients of similar size and scope
3. Your approach to this project — how you'd structure discovery, design, and development for our specific goals
4. Team — who from your firm would work on this, with brief bios
5. Timeline — your proposed schedule aligned with our milestones
6. Investment — total cost, payment milestones, what's included, what's not, and any options or add-ons
7. References — three client references we may contact

WEAK EXAMPLE

Please submit a complete proposal including all relevant information.

That instruction reliably produces 60-page proposals from agencies that pad and 3-page proposals from agencies that don't, with no way to compare them.

TEMPLATE COPY

Please submit a proposal of no more than [10–20] pages including:

1. **Firm overview**
2. **Relevant experience** — [number] examples
3. **Your approach to this project**
4. **Team** — bios
5. **Timeline** — aligned with our milestones
6. **Investment** — total cost, milestones, inclusions, exclusions
7. **References** — [two or three]

SECTION 15

Evaluation criteria

WHAT THIS IS FOR

How you'll score proposals, with weights. Weights force you to be honest about what matters most. Total should sum to 100%.

STRONG EXAMPLE

CRITERION	WEIGHT
Relevant experience and portfolio	25%
Approach and understanding of our goals	25%
Team and references	15%
Cost and value	15%
Accessibility and technical capability	10%
Cultural and mission alignment	10%

Scoring rubric: 5 — exceeds expectations; 4 — strong; 3 — adequate; 2 — limited gaps; 1 — insufficient.

WEAK EXAMPLE

We will evaluate proposals based on experience, approach, cost, and team.

Four nouns, no weights, no rubric. Indefensible if a losing vendor asks why.

TEMPLATE COPY

Use a table summing to 100%. See "Three preset weighting schemes" later in this guide for fit-priority, cost-priority, and experience-priority defaults you can pick from.

SECTION 16

Submission instructions

WHAT THIS IS FOR

How and when to send the proposal. Be explicit about time zone and format. Include the questions process.

STRONG EXAMPLE

Submit by: Tuesday, May 6, 2026, at 5:00 PM Eastern Time

Send to: Jamie Chen, Director of Communications, jamie@lakeshoreconservancy.org

Subject line: "Website RFP — [Your Firm Name]"

Format: PDF preferred; Word and shared links accepted

Questions: Submit by April 15 to the same email. A consolidated Q&A will be posted to lakeshoreconservancy.org/rfp on April 19.

WEAK EXAMPLE

Email your proposal to us by May.

No time zone, no format preference, no Q&A process. You'll get four versions of "wait, what did you mean by...?"

TEMPLATE COPY

Submit by: [Day, date, year, time, with time zone]

Send to: [Name, Title], [email]

Subject line: [Format]

Format: [Preference]

Questions: Submit by [date] to [email]. [How answers will be shared.]

SECTION 17

Appendices

WHAT THIS IS FOR

Anything that would clutter the main RFP but is useful for a serious bidder. Brand guide, current site analytics, content inventory, integration documentation, sample content.

STRONG EXAMPLE

Common appendices:

- **Appendix A — Brand assets:** logo files, color palette, typography, brand guide PDF
- **Appendix B — Current site analytics:** top pages, traffic sources, conversion data — last 12 months
- **Appendix C — Content inventory:** spreadsheet of current pages, ownership, status
- **Appendix D — Integration documentation:** API docs or vendor links
- **Appendix E — Sample content:** if the site involves a content type a vendor hasn't seen, include one or two examples

WEAK EXAMPLE

Attaching everything indiscriminately. Or attaching nothing when you have useful supporting materials.

Reference each appendix in the section it supports. Untethered attachments get ignored.

TEMPLATE COPY

The following supporting materials are available to bidders:

- **Appendix A — [Title]:** [Attached / available on request]
- **Appendix B — [Title]:** [Attached / available on request]

If you have no appendices, delete this section.

APPENDIX A

Three preset evaluation weighting schemes

Pick the one that matches what you actually care about. Adjust weights if you need to; delete the others.

FIT-PRIORITY — YOU'RE HIRING FOR A LONG-TERM PARTNER

CRITERION	WEIGHT
Relevant experience and portfolio	25%
Approach and understanding of project goals	25%
Team and references	15%
Cost and value	15%
Accessibility and technical capability	10%
Cultural and mission alignment	10%

COST-PRIORITY — YOU HAVE A FIXED BUDGET YOU CAN'T MOVE

CRITERION	WEIGHT
Cost and value	30%
Relevant experience and portfolio	20%
Approach and understanding of project goals	20%
Team and references	10%
Accessibility and technical capability	10%
Timeline feasibility	10%

EXPERIENCE-PRIORITY — YOU'VE BEEN BURNED BEFORE, YOU WANT PROOF

CRITERION	WEIGHT
Relevant experience and portfolio	35%
Team and references	20%
Approach and understanding of project goals	15%
Accessibility and technical capability	15%
Cost and value	10%
Timeline feasibility	5%

APPENDIX B

Frequently asked vendor questions

These are the questions you'll get asked most often during a Q&A round. Anticipating them in the RFP saves time.

"What's your existing platform and hosting setup?"

Cover this in Section 4 (Project Background) and Section 9 (Technical Requirements). Name the products.

"Who's making the final selection decision, and what's the approval process?"

Cover this in Section 16 (Submission Instructions) or as a paragraph after the timeline. Name the decision-maker. State whether a board vote is needed and on what date.

"Will the design be done by you, by us, or by a third party?"

If your brand is set and you're attaching a brand guide, cover this in Section 10. If you're hiring the vendor for both design and development, make that explicit.

"Who is responsible for content — writing, editing, migration?"

Cover this in Section 7 (Scope of Work) and Section 8 (Out of Scope). The most common cause of project overrun is unclear content ownership.

"What is the post-launch support arrangement?"

Cover this in Section 7 (Scope of Work) — duration and type. If you want an ongoing maintenance retainer beyond launch, say so and ask the vendor to propose it as a separate line item.

"Can we propose phased work or alternatives to the scope?"

Address this in Section 14 (Proposal Requirements). If you're open to phased approaches, say so explicitly. If you want a fixed scope, say that.

"Are you contacting other vendors, and how many?"

If you're inviting a known set of vendors, mention it. If it's an open RFP, mention that too. Vendors price differently for a closed shortlist versus an open call.

A FINAL ASK

If you'd rather not write this yourself

If you've used this template and it helped, we'd love to hear about it — and if it didn't, we'd love to hear about that even more. Email vadams@83creative.com with a sentence or two.

FREE 30-MINUTE RFP REVIEW

We'll read your draft and tell you what we'd change.

Any nonprofit or association preparing to hire a website vendor can book a free 30-minute review. We read the draft, flag what's missing or unclear, and suggest specific edits.

No pitch. No sales call. We get to see early what's being procured in the sector; you get a sharper RFP. Everyone wins.

Book at 83creative.com/rfp-review — or just reply to this PDF over email.

Victor Adams

Principal, 83 Creative

vadams@83creative.com · 83creative.com

Good luck with the project. The work matters, and the firm you pick will matter more than the document you write — but the document you write will heavily influence which firms put their best foot forward.