SOUTH DAKOTA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP: 2025-21

DRUPAL WEBSITES MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT

SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

RFP Number: 2025-21
Posted Date: September 25, 2025
Questions Due: October 6, 2025 by 2PM
Questions Answered: October 8, 2025 by 2PM
Proposal Due Date: October 16, 2025 by 2PM

Request for proposal information:
The South Dakota Science and Technology Authority (SDSTA) is seeking a professional partner organization who can execute system enhancements and develop new website functionalities that align with the Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF) evolving operations and objectives. Firms will be selected based on demonstrated competence and qualifications for the required work.

- This announcement is open to all businesses regardless of size. In order to be eligible for contract award the firm (individual) must be registered as a business entity with the South Dakota Secretary of State, the System for Award Management (SAM) and E-Verify.

Documents included in this Request for Proposal include:
- Draft Contract 2025-21
- Exhibit A: Insurance Requirements
- Exhibit B: Environment, Safety, and Health (ESH) Requirements
- Exhibit C: Scope of Work
- Exhibit D: Federal Terms and Conditions
- Exhibit E: Acknowledgement of Risk Waiver
- Exhibit F: Release, Agreement Not to Sue, and Waiver

1.0   Background

SDSTA is a quasi-governmental agency established by the State of South Dakota to operate and manage SURF at the former Homestake Gold mine in Lead, SD. This facility has been rehabilitated and developed to support a variety of scientific experiments, including physics, biology, geology, and others. Our mission is to advance world-class science and inspire learning across generations

2.0   Project Overview

The Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF) maintains three Drupal 11 websites hosted on Pantheon:

- The main SURF site: www.sanfordlab.org
- The SURF Institute for Underground Science site: institute.surf
- The Neutrino Day science festival site: neutrinoday.com

In addition, SURF operates a custom headless Drupal installation powering interactive digital exhibits at the Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center (SLHVC). To ensure these websites remain secure, stable and aligned with organizational needs, SURF seeks a vendor to provide ongoing backend maintenance, technical support and feature development. The selected partner will safeguard the technical health of the sites and collaborate with

SURF to implement enhancements and new functionality that support evolving operational, communication, and outreach goals.

3.0   Scope

3.1   Ongoing Maintenance: The vendor will provide proactive maintenance to keep the Drupal environment secure, reliable and optimized. Services include:

    3.1.1   Applying Drupal core security updates, patches and module/theme upgrades with compatibility testing

    3.1.2   Monitoring and addressing security vulnerabilities

    3.1.3   Performing database maintenance and optimization to support site performance and reliability

    3.1.4   Work within Pantheon's development/test/live workflow

    3.1.5   Documenting updates and providing maintenance reports

3.2   Custom Code Support: SURF's websites include custom-built Education and Outreach features that require specialized support. The vendor is responsible for the following:

    3.2.1   Maintain and troubleshoot existing custom code

    3.2.2   Provide bug fixes, performance tuning and code optimization

    3.2.3   Provide code documentation for any changes or updates to custom modules

    3.2.4   Ensure ongoing compatibility with Drupal core and contributed module updates

3.3   Feature Enhancements and Development

    3.3.1   SURF will periodically request new functionality and enhancements. The vendor will design and implement new features and provide consulting as needed.

3.4   Technical Support and Issue Resolution

    3.4.1   The vendor will serve as a responsive support partner, addressing technical challenges as they arise. This includes troubleshooting and debugging backend issues, resolving errors, restoring system functionality, and optimizing site performance and stability.

4.0   SDSTA Additional Requirements

4.1   Company Profile and Experience

    4.1.1   Overview of the company, size and areas of specialization

    4.1.2   Experience with Drupal 11, Pantheon hosting and managing multi-site environments

    4.1.3   Three Case Studies or examples of similar projects (particularly education, outreach or nonprofit/scientific organizations)

    4.1.4   Provide a minimum of two client references (preferably in education, research, non-profit or science sectors)

4.2   Team Qualification

    4.2.1   Bios or roles of key team members who will work with SURF

    4.2.2   Relevant Drupal contributions

4.3   Approach to Maintenance and Support

    4.3.1   Description of the vendor's process for applying updates, testing and deploying changes particularly within the Pantheon hosting environment.

    4.3.2   Security practices and monitoring methods

4.3.3   Approach to custom code maintenance

4.4   Feature Development and Consulting

4.4.1   Process for handling new feature enhancement requests

4.4.2   Consulting approach for recommending best practices

4.5   Support and Communication

4.5.1   Help desk for support process

4.5.2   Proposed communication practices with SURF staff

4.5.3   Vendor's approach to critical issues resolution

4.6   Project Management and Collaboration

4.6.1   Tools or platforms used for tracking and collaboration

4.6.2   Workflow for development/test/live deployment

4.6.3   Documentation standard

4.7   Method for calculating the cost of each project. Fixed rate, Time & Materials or rate sheet etc.

5.0   Schedule

The activities noted in the Scope section above should commence following the award of the contract. The schedule for completion of this project is negotiable and flexible to accommodate the contractor's availability. The proposed schedule for the project is:

RFP Posted .... September 25, 2025
Questions Submitted by 2PM .... October 6, 2025
Q&A Posted by 2PM .... October 8, 2024
RFP Responses Due by 2PM .... October 16, 2024
Contract Awarded By (Target) .... October 22, 2024

6.0   Submission Requirements

The bid in response to this RFP, maximum of 50 pages, must contain the following:

6.1   Proposal referencing RFP #2025-21 detailing the capabilities to perform the services outlined in the scope of work and associated additional requirements with a maximum of 50 pages.

6.2   Pricing Structure: Proposed pricing model (Hourly, Retainer, Hybrid), including standard turnaround times for security updates, minor issues and major incidents.

6.3   Rates Sheets for different roles and/or tasks that could be handled with a change order to this contract.

6.4   Any tiered service packages or minimum commitments.

6.5   Provide a detailed list of exceptions to the scope of work and additional requirements as necessary.

6.6   Optional: Value Added Services: Any additional services or expertise (e.g. accessibility,/content audits, UX design, analytics, SEO, content strategy) that could enhance SURF's websites.

7.0   Proposal Requirements

7.1   Bidders should submit an electronic copy of the bid in PDF format to Eva M. Omdahl at
      eomdahl@sanfordlab.org.

7.2   Questions must be sent in writing by email to Eva. Answers will be emailed to all prospective
      proposers and posted to the sanfordlab.org website.

7.3   The bid period may be extended at the discretion of the SDSTA based on the quantity and/or
      complexity of questions. Any notices of extension of time to respond will be distributed to all
      prospective proposers.

7.4   All communications regarding this procurement between RFP release and contract award shall be
      directed to Eva. Communications with other SDSTA staff regarding this procurement in advance
      of the contract award are not allowed.

8.0   Selection Process

The SDSTA will review all submitted bids for adherence to this request's requirements and capabilities and select
the firm providing the Best Value.