

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

WEBSITE TRANSITION AND BUILD

**Civic Federation
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March 23, 2026

CIVIC FEDERATION OVERVIEW

The Civic Federation is an independent, non-partisan government research organization that provides robust and objective fiscal analysis, recommendations, and governance oversight for the benefit of civic and business leaders, the media, and the general public in Chicago and the State of Illinois.

Our vision is that all residents and leaders in Illinois and the Chicago region are empowered with the education, insights, and fact-based research to effectively advocate for and promote sound government practices and policies. To that end, the Federation raises awareness, fosters understanding, and makes complex fiscal and governance issues accessible through reports, op-eds, social media, newsletters, and other free public resources.

Serving as a trusted, neutral broker on fiscal matters, the Federation's work informs elected officials, government staff, and policy groups as they make budgetary and legislative decisions. Our research and recommendations are frequently reviewed, discussed, and, in many cases, implemented. We also maintain close relationships with local, national, and international media outlets, regularly providing insights and commentary to ensure the public is informed on government finance and policy issues.

Please visit civicfed.org for more information.

PURPOSE OF RFI

The Civic Federation is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to gather insight from qualified web development firms regarding the redesign and modernization of our website platform.

The purpose of this RFI is to better understand potential approaches, capabilities, timelines, and cost considerations associated with migrating our existing Drupal-based website to a modern content management system and developing new digital infrastructure to support the Civic Federation's evolving work.

This RFI will help inform the Civic Federation's planning process and may be used to request a full proposal from appropriate partners.

This project will include two primary components:

1. Core Website Redesign and Platform Migration: Migrate the current Civic Federation website from Drupal to a modern content management system (such as WordPress or a comparable platform), along with a comprehensive redesign of site architecture, navigation, and user experience.
2. Local Government Best Practices Hub: Development of a new digital platform or subdomain that will host the Civic Federation's Local Government Best Practices Hub.

The Hub will serve as a dynamic, accessible resource center providing policy guidance, tools, and resources for local governments and civic leaders.

These two components can be implemented together or sequentially to ensure scalability and avoid duplicative development.

PROJECT CONTEXT

The Civic Federation's website has evolved through a series of incremental upgrades over nearly three decades, with the current Drupal-based infrastructure in place for more than 17 years. While periodic updates have improved specific features, the underlying platform has become increasingly difficult to maintain and expand.

The current system presents several challenges:

- Backend functionality is difficult for staff to manage without technical expertise
- Page templates and content structures are inflexible
- Search functionality and editorial workflow tools are unreliable
- New features require custom development
- The platform is not optimized for project-based content or resource hubs

At the same time, the Civic Federation's digital presence is expanding. In addition to research publications and commentary, the organization is developing new public-facing tools and resources, including the Local Government Best Practices Hub, which will require advanced search capabilities, strong content taxonomy, and scalable infrastructure.

A comprehensive redesign and platform transition will allow the Civic Federation to modernize its digital infrastructure and better serve its audiences.

ANTICIPATED NEEDS

The Civic Federation anticipates seeking a partner to provide strategic guidance, technical development, and implementation support for a two-phase website initiative. Through this RFI, we are seeking feedback on the proposed scope, potential approaches, and best practices.

Core Website Redesign and Platform Migration

Rebuilding the Civic Federation's main website on a modern content management system.

Expected components include:

- Discovery and Strategy - Guided planning discussions, vision for Civic Federation's digital presence, identification of audience priorities and user journeys
- Content Architecture - Site mapping and navigation re-design, publication organization, and planning for project-based hubs

- Design and User Experience - Refinements to ensure a modern, cohesive look and responsive design
- Technical Development – Platform migration, backend management, accessible developer tools
- Search and Content Discovery – Enhance search functionality on civicfed.org to find published content
- SEO and AI Optimization – Help Civic Federation reach a wider audience and ensure the organization is equipped with current tools and resources to scale up
- Content Management
- Testing and Launch – Website host (backend) and refreshed design (external)
- Training and Documentation – Provide training sessions and create tools in to support internal staff processes

Local Government Best Practices Hub

Development of a new digital platform or subdomain dedicated to the Civic Federation’s Local Government Best Practices Hub.

The Hub is envisioned as a resource center providing practical tools and guidance for policymakers, civic leaders, and government staff.

Expected components may include:

- Advanced search functionality
- Hierarchical, multi-tiered page structures
- Robust tagging and taxonomy systems
- Scalable architecture for future resource expansion
- Interactive or dynamic content elements
- Potential gated content or user engagement features
- Infrastructure capable of supporting future partnerships and projects

The Hub development and branding should build upon the architecture created in Phase I to ensure consistency, efficiency, and scalability.

While we do not have a strict timeline, we are hopeful that the work will commence this summer, 2026, and be concluded within 9-12 months at the longest.

REQUESTED INFORMATION

If you are interested in responding to this RFI and initiating a conversation with us, please email communications@civicfed.org with the following information. Please feel free to share existing materials; there is no need to create new content specifically for this request.

If you would prefer to share this information during a brief introductory conversation, we are happy to schedule a 30-minute call. In that case, please send the following information and general pricing structure so we can coordinate scheduling.

- Overview of your firm and relevant experience, including experience redesigning websites for research organizations, nonprofits, policy institutions, or membership-based organizations
- General methodology, including experience building content-rich websites, research libraries, resource hubs, and/or implementing advanced search, tagging systems, or taxonomy-driven content architecture
- Estimated pricing ranges or cost considerations for projects of this scale (if available)
- Available start timeframe and typical project timeline
- Examples of comparable website redesigns or platform migrations
- Description of communication and working style with clients
- Recommended CMS platforms for organizations with similar content needs
- Approach to SEO and emerging AI search optimization
- Best practices for building scalable resource hubs or knowledge libraries
- Approaches to balancing website redesign with future expansion projects
- References (optional)

The Civic Federation will review responses to this RFI to better understand the vendor landscape and potential approaches to the project. Based on the information received, the Civic Federation will invite select firms to participate in follow-up discussions and submit a full scope of work. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at communications@civicfed.org.