Q: Is there a target launch date? Is it tied to an event or some sort of date deadlines like a fiscal year or event?

A: **We do not have a target launch date. SFERS will work with the selected vendor to define features and timelines.**

Q: How will the winning vendor be selected? Is there a scoring matrix or something similar?

A: **Please refer to Section IV of the RFP: Proposal Evaluation Criteria.**

Q: Is there an incumbent? Will they be bidding?

A: **No.**

Q: Is there any preference for local vendors?

A: **Please refer to Section III of the RFP: LOCAL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (LBE) PROGRAM (OPTIONAL).**

Q: What is the budget for this project?

A: **The Budget is contingent upon the features and costs of developing those features submitted in the price proposal.**

Q: What is your current annual spend on CMS, hosting, and related support?

A: **Roughly $260k annually.**

Q: Who built the current websites - your internal team or a vendor?

A: **Vendor.**

Q: If it was a vendor, who was it?

A: **C3i3.**

Q: If you used an outside vendor, how much did you spend on the implementation of your current sites?

A: **Roughly $36k for initial portal development.**

Q: How many websites are in-scope for this project?

A: One.

Q: Is there a plan (or desire, if it's easy to do so) to create more sites in the future?

A: No.

Q: Are there any sites (or web apps) that are not directly referenced in this RFP that the county would benefit from consolidating into this new platform? If so, approximately how many?

A: No.

CMS

Q: Is there an organizational preference for open source vs. a proprietary CMS?

A: We prefer open source.

Q: If open source is a consideration, is there a preference for a specific CMS (i.e., Drupal, WordPress)?

A: WordPress.

Q: What is the current CMS?

A: Please refer to Website Technical Environment (current) under subsection C. Project Goals under Section II: GOODS AND SERVICES REQUESTED.

Q: Are there multi-lingual requirements? Is Google Translate or similar sufficient?

A: Yes.

Q: How many levels of users are needed?

A: This question is not clear. The website is used by SFERS members. Please refer to Section II: GOODS AND SERVICES REQUESTED to find information about our members.

Q: Can you provide information on your workflow needs?

A: Features to be determined collaboratively by SFERS and the selected vendor.

Q: Are survey/voting tools required?

A: No. They may be desired.

Q: Are you requiring photo/video galleries?

A: We will need a media library, but the features to be determined collaboratively by SFERS and the selected vendor.

Q: Is there a need for a document library?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you want email newsletter distribution capabilities?

A: Yes.

Q: Are e-commerce or personalization features desired?

A: Features to be determined collaboratively by SFERS and the selected vendor.

SEARCH

Q: Does search need to index the contents of pdf/Doc files?

A: Features to be determined collaboratively by SFERS and the selected vendor.

Q: Does the site search need to index content from other domains?

A: Possibly. Depending on solutions/designs.

INTEGRATIONS

Q: Please describe all integrations with other sites or data sources more complex than an iFrame or embed code. Will single-sign-on be used to control administrative access to the site? If yes, please elaborate.

A: The website may use data or integrate with other domains such as PeopleSoft. Yes, we will use single sign-on.

HOSTING

Q: Can you provide usage data, or estimate expected traffic to the site?

A: Last month – Approximately 29k hits on the portal.

Q: Do you need a contractual SLA for hosting (more expensive) or a best-effort SLA based on a 99.9% historical uptime (less costly)?

A: Best-effort SLA based on a 99.9% historical uptime will work for us.

Q: Are there special security requirements or audits involved?

A: Yes.

Q: Are there granular levels of permissions needed where certain people should only have access to certain sites? Or, even certain areas of sites?

A: Yes.

Q: Where is the CMS/website currently hosted?

A: AWS.

Q: Are you open to a cloud-hosted CMS?

A: No.

Q: If yes, do you have an existing relationship with a cloud provider like AWS, Azure, etc?

A: Yes – AWS.

Q: What is it about your current hosting setup that is making you seek a PaaS offering?

A: We are not asking for a new PaaS offering.

Q: Are there any security standards required for your CMS platform? i.e. HIPAA, PCI, SOCII, Fedramp, etc?

A: Yes.

Q: Please provide the average monthly numbers for page views of the websites combined (to the nearest 100K is fine)

A: We have only one website. It averages approximately 136k hits per month.

Q: Do you experience frequent surges of traffic that impact performance at critical times?

A: Yes.

Q: Have you dealt with any security issues or malicious traffic on your sites like DDoS attacks, SQL injections, etc? If so, what was the impact? Are you using anything for CDN or WAF currently?

A: No.

Q: Do you require 24/7 support access in the case of critical (site availability) issues?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you require specific response time SLAs for critical issues? If so, please specify expectations.

A: No.

CONTENT

Q: Would you describe the existing content as structured, with consistent separation of content and code?

A: Except for a few areas where the content is included in templates, most of the content is separate from the code. I wouldn't describe the content as fully structured, maybe semi-structured at best. We do have some content types that are structured, but most of the content is freeform, and built using the WordPress editor.

Q: a) Are tables used for layout in the existing content? b) What percentage of the current content is obsolete and won't be migrated to the new site? c) What is your plan for editing/creating content during the redesign? d) Do you expect copywriting or editing services as part of engagement?

A: We do not use tables for content layouts. We only use tables for tabular data.

Q: Do you need us to conduct an extensive discovery process that includes extensive research into user persona development - or a more streamlined discovery based on the web team's input and best practices?

A: **The level of discovery is to be determined by the selected vendor based on expertise and our scope of work requirements.**

DESIGN

Q: Can you provide examples of sites that are good models for what you want? How detailed are the existing branding guidelines?

A: **No. Features to be determined collaboratively by SFERS and the selected vendor. We currently have general branding guidelines.**

Q: Do you have high-quality photography/media assets available for the new site?

A: **Yes.**

Q: Please confirm that one design theme will carry across the entire site. If we need sub-themes of any type please specify.

A: **Features to be determined collaboratively by SFERS and the selected vendor.**

DEVELOPMENT

Q: Please confirm that the awarded vendor will primarily work remotely, with regular web conference meetings as needed.

A: **Yes.**

Q: Please describe the internal team who will be responsible for the website post-launch (developers, non-tech users, etc.)

A: **Our internal website team consists of both technical and non-technical experts.**

Q: Do different teams/departments manage their own sites? Or does one team own all web work?

A: **We have one team.**

Q: We are a US company with some remote team members working from outside of the US. Is there any restriction on their ability to contribute to the project?

A: **It depends on their role(s).**

SUPPORT

Q: How do you envision the relationship with the developer post-launch? Do you need a maintenance contract to keep sites patched and secure?

A: **We may require support for any proprietary features developed by the selected vendor.**

ARCHITECHTURE & INTERGRATION

Q: Will the new member portal be developed within the existing WordPress instance, or should it be a standalone application integrated with WordPress (e.g., via APIs or SSO)?

A: **We are open to either approach. It will depend upon the feature and the design proposed by the selected vendor.**

Q: Are there existing APIs for accessing member data, or will new APIs need to be developed for integration with your back-end systems

A: **There may be new APIs. It will depend upon the feature and the design proposed by the selected vendor.**

Q: Should the solution support Single Sign-On (SSO) using SAML, OAuth, or any other specified authentication standard?

A: **Yes. SAML.**

Q: How should the new portal interact with existing plugins such as wp-saml-auth, two-factor, and s3-uploads? Should all current functionalities be retained?

A: **We already have a member portal. We are looking for vendors to help us enhance the user experience and add new features and functions to the member portal. This question is to be answered during the design phase.**

DATA & MIGRATION

Q: Will the vendor be responsible for migrating existing member portal data, including personal information, statements, and historical forms? If yes, please provide: Data formats currently in use and the Volume of data (e.g., number of records, file size).

A: Member portal data already exists. Data is stored in SQL format. We store records for 81,000+ members in various tables.

Q: Are there legacy dependencies (e.g., XML-based data exchange) that must remain, or should the system move toward modern APIs (REST/GraphQL)?

A: It will depend on the feature design.

Q: What is the expected size and frequency of file uploads/downloads (e.g., trust documents, court orders) to ensure performance and storage planning?

A: We have Monthly, Bi-Weekly, Weekly, and Daily file uploads/downloads. SQL DB is about 50 GB.

SECURITY & COMPLIANCE

Q: Which cybersecurity standards or frameworks does SFERS require compliance with (e.g., NIST, ISO 27001, SOC 2 Type II)?

A: We follow the following security frameworks: NIST, ISO 27001, SOC 2 Type.

Q: Should all data in transit and at rest use encryption? If yes, what encryption standards are required (e.g., TLS 1.3, AES-256)?

A: Yes. TLS 1.3 in transit, AES-256 at rest.

Q: Are there any specific data residency requirements (e.g., storage within the U.S. only)?

A: Data storage is in the U.S. only.

Q: Will SFERS conduct its own penetration testing and vulnerability assessment, or should the vendor include this as part of the proposal?

A: Vulnerability assessment is not part of this RFP.

PERFORMANCE & SCALABILITY

Q: What is the expected concurrent user load (average and peak) for the new portal?

A: Less than a few hundred concurrent users.

Q: Do you have defined performance benchmarks for: Page load times, File upload/download speeds, Response times under peak load

A: Page load - 1 to 3 secs, File Uploads/Downloads speeds: 10GBPS.

Q: Are there future scalability plans (e.g., supporting 2x or 3x current user base within 5 years)?

A: We do expect 3% increase in the user base.

ACCESSIBILITY & LOCALIZATION

Q: Which WCAG level should the portal comply with (e.g., WCAG 2.1 AA)?

A: (WCAG) Version 2.1 Level AA.

Q: For multilingual support, should the portal integrate with automated translation services (e.g., Google Translate API) or provide manually localized content?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you require screen reader compatibility, keyboard navigation, and other assistive technologies for all features?

A: Yes.

FEATURES & FUNCTIONALITY

Q: For e-signature functionality, do you have a preferred solution (e.g., DocuSign, Adobe Sign), or should the vendor recommend and integrate one?

A: We are expecting the selected vendor to recommend a solution.

Q: For retirement benefit calculators, should the existing calculation logic be replicated, or do you require enhancements? Will SFERS provide updated formulas and business rules? How should notifications be delivered: Email only, In-app notifications, SMS (if yes, do you have an existing SMS gateway?)

A: **Existing logic should be used for calculations. SFERS will provide requirements, including formulas and business rules, for new and enhanced features and functions. We currently use email and SMS messages for communicating with our members.**

Q: Should the messaging system support: Two-way communication, File attachments, and Group messaging capabilities?

A: **Yes.**

Q: Should real-time validation be implemented for profile and beneficiary updates, and should these sync with any external systems?

A: **Yes.**

HOSTING & DEVELOPMENT

Q: Will the portal be hosted on SFERS' existing infrastructure, or should the vendor propose a managed hosting solution (e.g., AWS, Azure)?

A: **Our website is hosted on AWS.**

Q: Do you require the solution to be containerized (Docker/Kubernetes), or will it follow the traditional WordPress hosting model?

A: **Depending upon the feature, we are open to either solution. We expect the selected vendor to recommend a design.**

Q: Should the vendor configure and optimize the Cloudflare CDN for the new portal?

A: **No.**

TESTING & ACCEPTANCE

Q: Do you require automated testing (unit, integration, accessibility) as part of the development process?

A: **No. However, it is preferred.**

Q: Should performance/load testing simulate real-world scenarios (e.g., peak traffic, large file uploads)?

A: **Yes**

Q: During the 10-day remediation period, how many testing and fix iterations should the vendor anticipate?

A: **We expect the vendor to support testing until all major issues have been resolved for each new feature.**

MAINTENANCE & SUPPORT

Q: What is the expected post-launch support duration, and what SLA (Service Level Agreement) is required for issue resolution?

A: **30-60 Days. SLAs to be established during contract negotiations with the selected vendor.**

Q: Should the vendor include ongoing security patching and compliance updates in the maintenance plan?

A: **No.**

Q: Do you require 24/7 critical issue support, or will support be limited to business hours?

A: **Yes, for critical issues.**

COMPLIANCE & CERTIFICATION

Q: Do vendors need to provide SOC 2 Type II certification or complete the City's Cybersecurity Risk Assessment Questionnaire prior to contract execution?

A: **Yes.**

Q: Are there any specific insurance or bonding requirements that impact hosting or cloud infrastructure choices?

A: **Yes.**

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS—TIMELINE, DEPENDENCIES & PRIORITIZATION

Q: What is SFERS' target go-live date, and do you have a preferred project timeline for key milestones (design, development, testing, launch)?

A: **We do not have a target launch date. SFERS will work with the selected vendor to define features and timelines.**

Q: Are there any third-party systems or vendors the new portal must integrate with (e.g., payroll systems, identity management)?

A: Yes.

Q: Of the listed features (e.g., e-signature, calculators, messaging), are there any must-have items for Phase 1, and which can be planned for future phases?

A: Minimum Viable Product (MVP) list to be developed collaboratively with the selected vendor.

Q: How should feature prioritization be handled during the design and development phase? Will SFERS provide a feature roadmap, or should the vendor propose one?

A: New feature list and timeline to be developed collaboratively with the selected vendor.