



**Forest Preserves of Winnebago County**  
5500 Northrock Drive, Rockford, IL 61103  
815.877.6100 | [slorenz@winnebagoforest.org](mailto:slorenz@winnebagoforest.org)

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## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (“**FPWC**”) is accepting proposals from qualified web hosting and development companies for the following goods or services: the development and implementation of two websites (FPWC and FPWC Golf). Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria set forth in this RFP.

RFP documents may be obtained by emailing [slorenz@winnebagoforest.org](mailto:slorenz@winnebagoforest.org) or by visiting [www.winnebagoforest.org/bidsquotes](http://www.winnebagoforest.org/bidsquotes).

Proposals must be submitted via email to [slorenz@winnebagoforest.org](mailto:slorenz@winnebagoforest.org).

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| <b>PROPOSAL ISSUED DATE</b>   | 05/11/2026              |
| <b>INQUIRIES, QUESTIONS, EXCEPTIONS DUE</b><br><i>Must be submitted in writing to <a href="mailto:slorenz@winnebagoforest.org">slorenz@winnebagoforest.org</a>.</i> | 05/21/2026 by 4:30 p.m. |
| <b>RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES, QUESTIONS, EXCEPTIONS</b>   | 05/27/2026              |
| <b>PROPOSAL DUE DATE</b><br><i>Must be submitted via email to <a href="mailto:slorenz@winnebagoforest.org">slorenz@winnebagoforest.org</a>.</i>                     | 06/10/2026 by 4:30 p.m. |
| <b>INTERVIEWS &amp; PRESENTATIONS</b>   | TBD                     |

**Project Manager:** Sarah Lorenz, Communications Coordinator

**Telephone:** 815-877-6100

**Email:** [slorenz@winnebagoforest.org](mailto:slorenz@winnebagoforest.org)

**Important Notes:** FPWC bears no responsibility for emailed proposals that are not received. Emailed proposals with attachments greater than 10 MB may not be received and no error message will be generated. Applicants will receive a confirmation email notifying them of receipt. If applicants do not receive such an email, please follow up by email to Sarah Lorenz at [slorenz@winnebagoforest.org](mailto:slorenz@winnebagoforest.org). FPWC reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals determined to be in its best interest.

## BACKGROUND

Established in 1922 by public vote, the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (FPWC) is the third forest preserve district to be created in Illinois. The organization manages 45 forest preserves throughout Winnebago County, totaling over 11,600 acres. Forest preserves protect natural lands and the wildlife that inhabits them. They also provide areas for people to recreate, connect with nature, and learn about the benefits and history of Winnebago County. FPWC is dedicated to protecting, conserving, enhancing, and promoting Winnebago County's natural heritage for the environmental, educational, and recreational benefit of present and future generations. The organization values protecting and preserving natural lands and natural communities, connecting people to nature, educating the community on the benefits and history of the land, and being responsive to recreational needs while minimizing impact on the environment.

FPWC and FPWC Golf currently have two separate websites that are outdated in structure, software, and accessibility standards. The URL for the current FPWC website is [www.winnebagoforest.org](http://www.winnebagoforest.org) and the URL for the current FPWC Golf website is [www.playthepreserves.com](http://www.playthepreserves.com). We would like to retain both URLs.

Both websites are currently operated through Wix under the same account but with two separate subscriptions. The last website development for both sites was implemented approximately 5-6 years ago. No formal accessibility or user audits have been completed.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Scope

The objectives of this project are to provide FPWC with a website that acts as a consistent trusted source of information and as a community hub, as well as to provide FPWC Golf with a website that acts as a static marketing asset and lead generation platform. FPWC Golf is operated as part of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County but requires its own website.

### Project Team and Stakeholders

- The point person for this project will be the Communications Coordinator, supported by the Executive Director and the Administrative Services Manager.
  - The Communications Coordinator will be available for questions and feedback during the project.

- Key stakeholders include staff who will be managing the website (6 in total) and department directors.
  - Approximately 4-5 users with 1-2 everyday users
  - The website will be managed primarily by the Communications Coordinator, with assistance from the Administrative Services Manager and two Administrative Assistants.
- Key personas include the general public, attendees/visitors, and the press/media.

### **Project Timeline**

- Notification of the contract award is anticipated to be made by July 2026.
- The project will commence upon execution of the contract.
- Both websites must be live by April 26, 2027 to meet the federal WCAG 2.2 AA standards deadline.
- Site launches by the end of the 2026 calendar year (November or December) or early 2027 (January or February) are preferred due to low site traffic during this time of year.

### **Budget**

- Proposals should present a cost-effective and transparent budget that reflects the scope of work, schedule, and desired outcomes.

### **Deliverables**

- Creation of two new websites with input from FPWC staff
  - Design and creation of website for FPWC
  - Design and creation of separate website for FPWC Golf
- Selection and implementation of a multi-side management tool
- Migration of existing content to new sites, including categorizing, relinking, etc...
  - A Search Engine Optimization plan should be implemented throughout the production process to ensure that migration will result in losing as little standing in Google and other search engine reports as possible.
- Working with FPWC stakeholders to track progress, provide project guidance, and attain content approvals
- Testing and launch
- Provision of a training guide and set number of support hours to be used for the two new sites

### **Minimum Requirements**

- Compliance (at minimum) with WCAG 2.2 AA/Section 508 accessibility standards
- Compliance with ISO/IEC cybersecurity standards

- Must be mobile-friendly and responsive
- Must redirect old URLs to new sites
- Content and creative asset migration
- Selection and implementation of multi-site management tool
- SEO optimization
- Standardization of content and features across browsers (Chrome, Explorer, Firefox)
- Google Analytics functionality
- Disaster Recovery Plan
- 5-year maintenance and support plan

### **Preferred Requirements**

- Integration with geolocation software to provide interactive preserve maps
- Enhanced form and employment application capabilities
- Enhanced event listing display

### **Measurement of Success**

- Success will be defined by two fully-functional sites by the designated live date, as well as a mix of quantitative metrics, qualitative feedback, and outcomes.
  - Website traffic (visits, unique visitors); user engagement (bounce rate, session duration, pages per session, navigation flows); conversion metrics (form submissions, CTR); SEO performance; mobile performance; accessibility scores; etc...

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| <b>SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS</b> |
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Proposals must be submitted via email to Sarah Lorenz, Communications Coordinator, [slorenz@winnebagoforest.org](mailto:slorenz@winnebagoforest.org) by **4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 10, 2026**.

### **Minimum Submission Requirements**

Applicants should submit a technical proposal which contains the following:

- Cover letter summarizing your understanding of the project, your approach, and why your team is well-suited for FPWC
- The education, qualifications, experience, and training of all persons who would be assigned to provide services along with their names and titles (including biographies and resumes of personnel)
- A description of any particular area(s) of expertise you or your business may possess that have not been included in the response provided above

- Proposed Work Plan, timeline, and methodology (including key milestones and engagement approach)
- Budget and fee structure (including hourly or daily rates, estimated hours, deliverables, maintenance, website hosting, and other anticipated expenses)
- A copy of the applicant's Business Registration Certificate
  - Applicants must be licensed and registered to do business in Illinois upon contract award.
- A VPAT (Voluntary Product Accessibility Template) or ACR (Accessibility Conformance Report) to reflect that the applicant's services meet Section 508 and WCAG 2.2 AA standards
- Minimum of three case studies
  - Commercial sector case studies are acceptable, but public sector examples are preferred.
- Minimum of three professional references (phone numbers and email addresses)
  - Commercial sector references are acceptable, but public sector references are preferred.
- Proposed Disaster Recovery Plan
- Proposed 5-year maintenance and support plan

### **Submission Preferences**

- It is preferred that the applicant have some experience with developing and hosting a website for a governmental entity or non-profit.
- One single PDF is preferred.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

The following criteria will be used in evaluating the proposals:

- Ability to meet minimum requirements
- Ability to meet preferred requirements
- Expressed understanding of proposal objectives
- Quality of Work Plan
- Overall cost details
- Qualifications/experience of company
- Qualifications/experience of personnel working on the project
- Cost/quality of Disaster Recovery Plan
- Cost/quality of 5-year maintenance and support plan