

## **Request for Proposals Smartscape Website and Database**

### **OBJECTIVE**

The Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (AMWUA) seeks a qualified consultant to redesign and redevelop the Maricopa County Smartscape.org website and incorporate the Pima County Smartscape Program, which currently has a separate website. The Phoenix-area and Tucson-area Smartscape programs are in the process of re-aligning teaching and services, and potentially expanding to other county extension offices throughout the state in the future. The existing website does not meet program needs and will require a comprehensive overhaul, including defining core branding and messaging for the purpose of the site and for marketing the Smartscape program to landscape professionals, residents, and consumers in both Maricopa and Pima Counties. The site will include online registration for professional training classes; a content management system to allow administrators to manage class registration; a secure, online payment mechanism to collect class fees (Maricopa only); attendance and participant history; and a searchable, consumer-facing directory of graduates of the professional training program.

### **BACKGROUND**

Smartscape is an affordable, comprehensive, research-based training program that instructs landscape professionals in the fundamentals of design, installation, irrigation, and maintenance of low-water-use landscapes. Classes are taught by local industry experts, academics, and practitioners. The program was developed collaboratively by Tucson Water, the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association, the Arizona Nursery Association, the Arizona Landscape Contractors Association, and other industry representatives. Smartscape was launched in both the Tucson and Phoenix areas in 1994 to increase landscape water efficiency in Arizona's urban corridor.

Proper plant selection and appropriate irrigation in urban landscapes is a key water resources management strategy in Arizona. Throughout the urban corridor, outdoor water use ranges from 25% up to 65% of the total potable water produced by municipalities. Unlike water used indoors that is recycled and reused, water used outside is lost from the urban water cycle. Landscape professionals influence water use through the design, installation, water scheduling and maintenance of these landscapes. Smartscape has provided foundational training for thousands of landscape professionals for over 20 years.

The Smartscape.org website is a critical component of the program. It serves two audiences—landscape professionals and the public—and several purposes:

- 1) Providing information on upcoming Smartscape training and registration, as well as other training opportunities and resources for landscape professionals
- 2) Promoting the value of training and certification to landscape professionals
- 3) Promoting the value of hiring trained, certified landscape professionals to residents and businesses
- 4) Specifically promoting graduates of the Smartscape program and enabling consumers to contact those available for hire
- 5) Enabling program staff statewide to manage the registration, attendance, and contact information for current and past participants
- 6) Influencing the culture of, and expectations for, landscape design and maintenance

## TASKS

The following is a general description of the project scope at this point. Additional detail will be provided once the contract is awarded. We expect there will be a discovery phase to further clarify and refine the scope of work.

1. Redevelop Smartscape database and integrate online registration
  - a. Behind the Smartscape website lies a database intended to maintain all the records of program participants from 1994 to present, including registration information, contact information, attendance information, and the information that populates the directory of program graduates for hire. The existing Smartscape database needs to be redeveloped so that the information can be better managed and allow us to expand the information that we track.
  - b. All historical records must be included in the database. Any missing records will need to be imported from Excel spreadsheets to the database.
  - c. Currently, the participant database contains only classes and attendance in Maricopa County. This will be expanded to track classes and attendees in both Maricopa and Pima Counties.
  - d. Prospective participants should be able to register through the website with the information integrating into the database and creating an initial profile.
2. Create a comprehensive, user-friendly content management system
  - a. The new content management system must enable the program administrators to edit and manage all the information displayed on the website and contained within the database, including updating class information, managing attendance records, and administering other tasks related to tracking student participation and satisfaction of course requirements.
  - b. Program administrators must be able to query the database and export information for regular reporting requirements.
  - c. Through the content management system, program administrators need to be able to communicate with current students and past graduates, either by posting a notification that class materials have been uploaded to the website (current students could receive an email), pulling their contact information from a report (past graduates), and other basic functionality, to be determined in the scope of work.
3. Redesign and recreate the Smartscape website
  - a. Course information, registration, and payment: Landscape professionals need to be able to easily find, register, and pay for upcoming courses specific to either Maricopa or Pima County. Companies should be able to register multiple people at once, with a max of five permitted from one company per class. In Maricopa County, it should be possible for one person to both register and pay for up to five employees at once, (Pima County does not charge for registration).
  - b. Value of training and certification: There should be section of the site that explains the value of training and industry certification, both for the sake of the landscape professional and the consumer of their services. This section will describe primary landscape professional trainings and certifications and link to sites with additional information.
  - c. Current student and graduate portal: We need a way for students and graduates to access content specific to their user profile. This content should not be accessible to the broader public. How this is achieved is up to the developer (for instance, students could receive/create unique usernames and passwords upon registering for Smartscape courses to gain access to a “members only” type section of the website). Graduates of the

Smartscape program would have access to edit and update their contact information for the “Find a Trained Pro” directory (with final approval to upload any changes granted by program coordinator), consent to be listed on the directory, view course materials, access promotional marketing materials to showcase their training, and easily find and register for additional courses. Student resources may include PDFs of PowerPoint presentations and other relevant materials. Students may only access materials that coincide with the course they participated in. Program coordinators need to be able to use the website to communicate with current students and past graduates when necessary, such as sending emails or alerts to the entire group or only a selected portion of the group. It should be easy and efficient to connect with members of a group using a variety of filters, including (but not limited to): all attendees of a particular class in the present or the past, current students who recently missed a class, past students who need to make up a class, etc.

- d. Directory: The Smartscape directory is the link between professionals and consumers looking for a quality landscaper. Residents need to be able to easily locate and contact a qualified professional near them. Professionals need to be able to showcase certifications and other trainings, as well as what professional services they offer through this directory. Graduates of the program will opt into the directory and should have the ability to go into a secure section of the site to update their information themselves.
- e. Consumer awareness: When consumers come to the Smartscape website it will likely be through the Smartscape directory, seeking a landscape professional for hire. We not only want them to be able to find a qualified professional through the directory, but we also want them to be able find the resources they need to learn about what healthy, attractive, and efficiently irrigated landscapes look like and how to get one. This will be in the form of resources and classes specifically for residents.
- f. Develop cohesive branding, design, and messaging: Smartscape aims to drive the market for sustainable, healthy landscapes by developing and inspiring a qualified workforce and by communicating the value of qualified, professional landscapers and sustainable landscapes to residents and businesses. Before we begin building the site, we want to ensure we have a clear brand, core messages, and a cohesive design to support both the site and marketing efforts. While this RFP does not include capacity to launch a marketing campaign, we expect design and messaging deliverables to support a future campaign. This is a critical step to ensuring the success and usefulness of this site.

The final contract for this project will include language granting rights to and ownership of the website and underlying database, including all graphics, design, structure, coding, data, and other digital assets created for this project will be released to AMWUA. AMWUA will be granted a perpetual, worldwide, non-exclusive license to use any copyrights created by the consultant pursuant to the signed contract.

## **TIMELINE**

- March 5, 2018: Proposals due by the close of business
- March 16, 2018: Vendors will be notified of winning proposal by close of business
- July 1, 2018: Anticipated date for a completed contract and project begins
- June 30, 2019: Website and database complete

## **PROPOSAL CONTENT AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

1. Brief description of the proposer's firm. The proposal shall contain all of the following information:
  - a. Office location
  - b. Length of time in business
  - c. Total number of employees and number of local employees
  - d. Names of principals and their disciplines
  - e. Services provided by the firm
  - f. Experience in providing similar services within the last 3-5 years, including examples of recent work (especially live links)
  - g. Three (3) references for work on similar projects and/or client references that can attest to your ability to meet project requirements and deadlines.
2. Subcontractors: Please list any firms that will act as subcontractors to your firm.
3. Project Team: List those individuals who will do the work on this contract. Provide the following information for each team member:
  - a. Team assignment; include classification, hourly rate and projected number of hours each team member will work on each task listed above
  - b. Technical ability, experience and general qualifications
4. Schedule: Indicate the firm's proposed time schedule for completing the services as described, deliverables and review points along the way, including when content would be needed from AMWUA team.
5. Method of Approach: Demonstrate the understanding of the services and the steps you will undertake to accomplish the Tasks defined above. Discuss the firm's unique ability, if any, to professionally develop website, database, and branding services for the Smartscape program.
6. Estimated project cost and a proposed payment schedule. Keep in mind that we are a non-profit with limited funding and a responsibility to our members and communities. We are seeking a contractor who will work with that in mind to develop the most cost-effective solutions possible.

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SCORING CRITERIA**

1. Project approach: 40 points
  - a. Demonstrable understanding of project scope, including strong QA/QC methodology and protocols.
  - b. Project team's availability and ability to deliver within the referenced timeline.
  - c. Project management approach, tailored to the Smartscape stakeholders' defined needs.
2. Experience: 35 points
  - a. Firm and project team experience with similar projects.
  - b. Three (3) references of similar work projects.
  - c. Quality and relevance of design and functionality in sample work provided
3. Cost: 25 points
  - a. Overall price, including cost control ability.

Maximum possible score: 100 points

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

A selection committee of Smartscape stakeholders will review the responses to the Request for Proposals-Smartscape Website and Database. Using the aforementioned scoring criteria, the committee will rank the firms for selection. A round of interviews with the top firms for final selection is possible, but not required for this selection process, and is at the discretion of the selection committee.

## **CONTACT**

Proposals should be submitted either via email or mail to the following address:

Michelle Kuzdas  
Arizona Municipal Water Users Association  
3003 N Central Ave, Ste 1550  
[mkuzdas@amwua.org](mailto:mkuzdas@amwua.org)  
(602) 248-8482

Proposals will remain unopened in a secure folder in the AMWUA office and will only be reviewed once the submission deadline has passed. Proposals will be graded and considered by a team of reviewers.

Please direct any questions you have regarding this project or RFP to:

Sam Jaskolski  
Programs Assistant  
Arizona Municipal Water Users Association  
3003 N Central Ave, Ste 1550  
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