Request for proposals: Organization Website and Conference Subsite

For Allied Media Projects

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Organizational background

Allied Media Projects is a not-for-profit based in Detroit, Michigan.

Allied Media Projects (AMP) cultivates media for liberation. Our media includes all the ways we communicate with the world. Our liberation is an ongoing process of personal, collective, and systemic transformation. We are a network of people and projects, rooted in Detroit and connected to hundreds of other places across the globe. Together, we grow and exchange ways of using media to create the world we need.

AMP incorporated as a non-profit in 2001, growing out of the Allied Media Conference (AMC). AMC (then called the Midwest Zine Conference) started in 1999 in Bowling Green, Ohio. The organization and conference has been based in Detroit since 2007.

Our impact

The 20th annual Allied Media Conference, held June 2018, was our largest to date, with 3,500 people engaging with the conference through official, offsite, and auxiliary events. The conference featured more than 300 workshops, plenaries, meet-ups and parties organized by curators and coordinators from across the country. AMC 2018 was attended by 21 national delegations from New York, Chicago, Seattle, Baltimore, Indianapolis, and more.

The Sponsored Projects Program has grown rapidly, from a dozen projects in 2014 to more than 125 currently. Out of that fiscal sponsorship program, we’ve also incubated a Speakers Bureau that supports people in our network in presenting their work around the world; it currently represents 12 speakers and counting.
Our vision

AMP envisions and attempts to model a world in which we, collectively:

- **Care** for ourselves, each other, other species, and the planet;
- **Dismantle** supremacist systems as they operate upon us and within us;
- **Assume responsibility** for creating new liberatory ways of being, and;
- **Cultivate** life affirming joy.

In all of the above, we do this work with an emphasis on collaboration and collective power. Please see our full Network Principles [here](#).

Summary of project

**Allied Media website rebuild and redesign**

Since becoming a non-profit, the work of Allied Media Projects has evolved from being exclusively the Allied Media Conference; to being the AMC plus a collection of community media programs in Detroit; to being the AMC plus a vast network of media-based organizing initiatives that spans the country.

This growth has emerged out of the needs of our communities and the strategies we’ve devised to meet those needs, one after another. We love seeing visionary, radical, media-based social justice organizing flourish with our support.

To support the breadth of this work and keep up with the technological advances of our day we envision a rebuilt, redesigned alliedmedia.org.

A successful new site will be able to meet all of Allied Media’s varied needs. By this, we mean both Allied Media in terms of our organization, our staff and the work we do; as well as “Allied Media” in terms of the diverse people and projects who make up our extended network, who are looking to our site for conference information, program resources and ways to connect and stay informed.

To achieve this, the online presence we are seeking to design and deploy would need to:
• Convey the mission, vision and history of AMP plus news and announcements
• Support all facets of delivering our annual conference; including sharing the programming and schedule, accepting session proposals and attendee registration
• Support the online infrastructure of our core programs, Sponsored Projects Program and Speakers Bureau; including profile pages for individual projects, and for speakers’ booking and inquiry pages
• Grow our ability to shape stories and publish content in innovative, engaging ways
• Provide essential resources to empower community members, such as downloadable zines and publications
• Thoughtfully integrate third-party applications to support all of the above, when appropriate. In the past, we have used MailChimp, ZenDesk, EventBrite and Sched; we are open to others that fit our needs.

Our network creates incredibly vital and beautiful work. We want our refreshed site to be a container that enables this work to shine — one that is correspondingly beautiful, functional, accessible, innovative, intuitive and fun.

This RFP is actually two bids in one. We have come to the conclusion that an ideal Allied Media online presence includes:

1. a general site (alliedmedia.org) that houses our year-round core programs (Sponsored Projects and Speakers Bureau), plus serves as a promotional tool for AMP overall.
2. a subsite for the Allied Media Conference (amc.alliedmedia.org), with content that will change with each iteration of the conference.

Our hope and vision is to seamlessly integrate two sites that provide complementary functionality, under one design and branding rubric. We are also open to proposals that would seek to elegantly unify all desired functionality into one user experience.

We would also like this redesign process to explore how we can better center consent in digital applications and spaces. Please read more about “consentful technology” principles, [here](#).

**Note:** In preparation for this RFP, we have undertaken a public, participatory design process with our community, including collaborative online work sessions to identify core audience identities, wants and needs; an online survey informed by those sessions; and AMP staff-specific sessions and interviews. We will be able to share those findings with the selected firm, and aim to work with a team that thrives on
collaboration and these kinds of community-centered design processes.

Solution Requirements

Organizational Goals for Project

In deploying the envisioned solution, AMP hopes to achieve:

- A general AMP website with robust options for sharing information, storytelling and marketing of our program services.
- An AMC subsite that aesthetically and structurally complements the general AMP site — but can change and evolve slightly with each iteration of the conference, i.e. be easily reskinned.
- Both should thoughtfully integrate third-party/hosted solutions in order to meet our needs, while considering our values centered on consentful technology and community-determined open-source knowledge sharing.
- Both should be able to meet user accessibility needs.
- Both should align with the [Design Justice Network principles](https://www.designjustice.org/) and [digital justice](https://www.digitaljustice.org/) movement work.

Target User Profiles

In order for the project to be successfully realized, the solution must deliver specific benefit to several distinct user audiences, listed below in priority order:

For the general AMP website:

1. Members of the AMP network (in general)

   Our folks have many, varied identities and backgrounds; interests, desires, needs; and ways to use our site.

   Folks in our wider community are looking for general information about AMP, from current news to history, mission and vision, and staff bios.

   Others are looking for information about our core programs, Sponsored Projects and Speakers Bureau, whether to join, make inquiries, donate to or otherwise support the
programs.

Others are looking to shop the AMP store with easy navigation and search functions.

Folks are also looking to access AMP resources on media-based organizing that are accessible in different languages, media and formats.

2. Sponsored Projects leads and participants

These are folks whose projects are fiscally sponsored by AMP. They are already deep in the AMP network, though their formal working relationship within the program may be anywhere from brand new to years old.

Project leads and project participants are looking for a Sponsored Projects homepage and individual project pages that democratically and beautifully lift up the vibrancy of their work. They are looking for a sense of online community and easy access to the resources needed to perform their work (such as policy handbooks and payment request forms).

3. Speakers Bureau speakers and hosts

Speakers are looking for one central place to showcase their work. Bios, descriptions of sessions and booking pages should all be readily accessible or downloadable from the Speakers Bureau pages.

Similar to Sponsored Projects, speakers also deserve a section of the site that lifts up their work alongside each other.

Potential hosts are looking for information on speakers they’d like to book.

4. AMP staff and systems administrators

Folks who work at AMP are looking for a website that is easy to use from the back end as well as the front end. Ideally, our refreshed site would have a streamlined, visually arresting design that is more image- and graphic-based, and less text dependent than our current site.
We want to support our network in doing their work, and point folks to the site as online infrastructure for doing so. We also envision the site as a beautiful platform for telling stories and promoting our organization. Again, this could involve embedded third-party and hosted sites to do so.

Folks who work at AMP in the technology, operations and communications departments — and those affiliated with the web design and build team — will need access to the site backend to do basic changes like update profile pages, draft and publish new blog posts.

Folks with higher permissions and technical ability may need access to create new sections on the website or modify design.

5. Supporters

Current and potential funders, foundations and fans of AMP are looking for our mission, vision, goals and proof of our work out in the world conveyed in accessible and beautiful ways.

Where and how on the site to make a donation — or other ways to support — should be clear and easy to locate.

6. Press and media

Media folks looking to report on or uplift our work should also be able to access basic information about AMP and points of inspiration.

Major announcements, press releases, etc should be easily searchable and accessible.

For AMC subsite:

1. AMC attendees

AMC is often people's first entry point into the AMP network. The magic and the needs of the AMC are vast; it is essential that we convey a lot of information to a lot of different
people, concisely and considering different accessibility needs.

AMC attendees range in age from youth to elders. They are active in their local communities working for social change. They have a range of ethnicities, sexualities, gender identities and dreams for a better world. They are interested in learning and connecting with others. They are active and engaged, and are all involved in AMC in varying ways and degrees of participation — from first-time event volunteers to long-time track coordinators.

On a basic level, all attendees are looking for information about conference programming and about Detroit. The site, for them, should be both a place of inspiration and hard, logistical information — from where to go inside and outside the conference, to places to eat while in the city, to how to find rides and places to stay in the wider community.

2. AMC content coordinators, session presenters, speakers, performers

In addition, folks who are involved in coordinating and organizing sessions at the conference — the folks that help us build this thing behind the scenes — are looking for ways to connect with each other and accessible resources to support their work. They want to feel affirmed, supported and appreciated in participating at this level.

Folks who are presenting — be it speaking, teaching a workshop, performing, etc. — need a similar combination of inspiration and information, especially if they are engaging with AMC for the first time in this position.

3. AMC remote attendees

We would like the site to evolve in the future to support more live-streamed sessions, and other ways for folks to engage remotely.

4. AMC multilingual attendees

We are exploring how to decentralize English at future conferences. We would like the site to evolve in the future to complement that as well, with different language options. We would like to explore what options and costs there would be for language support on the website; but are not wedded to any specifics.

5. AMC funders, sponsors and partners
Foundations and individual donors who are active, past and future supporters of our work should be able to easily stay up to date on our work and make monetary contributions through the website. They should feel a sense of community and that they are deeply valued.

Supported User Stories

For vendors and agencies interested in responding to this RFP, we have also prepared a more detailed summary of required functionality for the two sites.

Please email communications@alliedmedia.org to obtain access to the full set of functional requirements.

Coexistence and Competition

Here are some other websites that intrigue us. We are especially curious about media organizations/brands who have a separate or subsite for their events.

- Pitchfork / Pitchfork Music Festival
- Mozilla / Mozilla Fest
- Complex / Complex Con
- South by Southwest
- Afropunk
- Eyeo Festival
- Ford Foundation
- Open Society Foundations
- Beotis

Desired Look for Solution

We are looking for an uncluttered approach that communicates experience and authority while engendering confidence in the visitor. We want all visitors to feel smart and supported while moving through the site and its content.

This is a content-intensive and driven site, therefore intuitive navigation and text handling is critically important. We want navigation/linkage obvious and clear.

We are looking for a design that thoughtfully, consensually, and elegantly integrates third-party/hosted sites.
Some words for reference include:

- Grown
- Bold
- Rich brilliance
- Accessible
- Functional
- Innovative
- Beautiful
- Vibrant
- High energy
- Wildly joyful
- Sometimes serious — but not boring
- Deep power

**Measurements/Metrics**

Overall, we are looking for depth of interactions over sheer volume. We’d like to measure time spent on site and real engagement (i.e. how many folks have filled out a form, signed up for the mailing list, registered for an event).

**Deliverable Specifications**

Projected specifications will include:

- Desired Site Launch for first phase of Allied Media Projects organization website: 1/15/2020
- Desired Site Launch for first phase of Allied Media Conference subsite: 11/15/2019
- Core pages on site: Approximate range 500-550 pages. AMP anticipates taking an active role in content migration, and we plan to discuss approaches in this regard with all respondents under consideration.
- Solution should be CMS-based. We are looking for a CMS that is easy to use for admins and editors, matches our design requirements, and best matches our values around open and consentful technology. We are open to popular open-source platforms.
- Site to also include:
  - Ability to host embedded or hosted media
  - Ability to host embedded content modules from other platforms
Compliance with generally accepted accessibility standards

Review & Testing

- Organizational stakeholders will review and provide feedback on creative design and overall look and feel.
- Prior to the site’s formal launch, we will have agreed milestones and corresponding periods of testing to ensure site functionality and stability while also inviting feedback from community and network stakeholders.

Profile of Preferred Design/Development Firm

- Strong expertise in designing/developing interactive content-heavy websites for not-for-profit organizations
- Understands and employs SEO best practices
- Understands and can advise on best third-party/hosted sites to integrate
- Attentive to details, service, available budget and deadlines
- Understands and is enthusiastic in modeling consent in digital spaces
- Experience in accessibility for web
- Demonstrates commitment to and alignment with Allied Media Projects mission, vision and goals

Our communications, technology and operations department staff will be available to collaborate with the selected vendor, plus provide additional data and context. Staff includes:

- Communications director
- Communications manager
- Design director
- Technology manager
- Chief operations officer
- Executive director

Note: We will also be working with a consultant that will scope out the application of consentful technology for the website; those findings will be shared with the selected vendor.
RFP Submission Details

Please submit your response by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on August 9th, 2019. Your submission must include:

- Links to site work done within the last two years with a budget range of $25,000-$100,000
- Explanation of approach and platform used

In addition, all questions submitted by August 5, 2019 will be answered in one email to interested parties by August 7, 2019.

Send Proposals To:

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