



STRONGHEARTS

Native Helpline

StrongHearts Native Helpline Request for Proposals (RFP)

Project:

StrongHearts Website Redesign & WordPress Migration

Organization Background about StrongHearts Native Helpline

StrongHearts Native Helpline (StrongHearts): Launched in March 2017, StrongHearts Native Helpline was born from the vision of creating a culturally grounded resource that truly honors the strength and resilience of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities. Developed in collaboration with the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center and the National Domestic Violence Hotline, StrongHearts is a survivor-centered, anonymous, confidential, and no-cost service created by and built to serve AI/AN communities across the United States. Dedicated to supporting Native American survivors of domestic, dating, and sexual violence—as well as their concerned family members and friends—StrongHearts offers culturally appropriate advocacy and connections to Native-centered resources.

By calling or texting 1-844-7NATIVE (1-844-762-8483) 24/7 or chatting online at strongheartshelpline.org, survivors can connect one-on-one with knowledgeable advocates who provide lifesaving tools, immediate support, resources, and guidance to help survivors find safety and live free from abuse.

Mission: We exist to restore power to Native Americans impacted by domestic, dating and sexual violence by weaving together a braid of safety, sovereignty and support.

Vision: We envision a return to our traditional lifeways: where all our relatives are safe, violence is eradicated, and sacredness is restored.

Guiding Values: Bravery, Culture, Interrelatedness, Trust, Humility and Resilience

StrongHearts is headquartered in Eagan, MN, with a satellite office in Sault Ste. Marie, MI, where some staff work in a hybrid capacity, while the rest of the team works remotely. The core focuses of our work are:

Crisis Intervention and Safety Planning

StrongHearts is the only culturally-appropriate AI/AN national service provider offering services via call, text or chat 24/7/365.

Education

Core to our vision is the eradication of domestic, dating and sexual violence. Our website and social media pages provide an education resource for Native American victim-survivors, teens, health care providers, law enforcement and policy-makers. StrongHearts is an essential resource on healthy relationships and how teens and adults can protect themselves from domestic, dating and sexual violence.

Advocacy Through Data and Information

Backed by over eight years of data from over 60,000 contacts (calls, texts and chats), StrongHearts has comprehensive and accurate real-time data on the realities, dangers, and effects of domestic, dating and sexual violence experienced by Native Americans in the United States. From the prevalence and patterns of abuse in relationships to the support networks and resources available, StrongHearts is at the center of the effort to end domestic, dating and sexual violence.

We are able to change lives by providing a path to safety, strength, and recovery. In 2024, we answered 15,000+ calls, texts and chats from people all over the United States and its territories; people who felt they could finally seek the help they needed and let their voices be heard. Of those who disclosed their gender, the majority identified as female.

Request for Proposal

StrongHearts is accepting proposals for a consultant or firm to rebuild our website in WordPress. We seek a partner who will collaborate with the Communications Manager to:

- Enhance user experience and engagement by creating a more intuitive, accessible, and visually appealing website that reflects the cultural identities, values, and traditions of diverse Native communities.

- Increase website traffic and interactions through improved design, navigation, and search engine optimization (SEO) while ensuring that content resonates with and is accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native audiences.
- Ensure ease of management and updates by developing a user-friendly WordPress backend that allows StrongHearts staff to efficiently update content, maintain the site long-term, and sustain cultural integrity in messaging.
- Optimize website performance and accessibility to ensure fast load times and mobile responsiveness.
- Strengthen digital storytelling and resource access by improving how StrongHearts' content, services, and resources are presented, ensuring that the website serves as a culturally grounded, trusted space for Native survivors, their families, and communities.

Project Overview

Background

Since its launch in 2017, StrongHearts Native Helpline has relied on its website as a critical tool to connect AI/AN survivors of domestic, dating, and sexual violence with culturally honoring support and resources. Initially, StrongHearts partnered with a firm to develop and maintain the website using the Kirby CMS platform. While this system has supported our needs over the years, we now recognize the limitations it presents in terms of flexibility, user experience, and staff autonomy in managing and updating the site.

Current Needs and Vision

As StrongHearts continues to grow and expand its digital presence, we are seeking to rebuild our website using the WordPress platform. This transition is driven by our goal to create a more user-friendly, accessible, and culturally reflective website that better serves Native communities and those seeking support. A key priority is ensuring that the new website is easier for StrongHearts staff to manage and update independently, reducing reliance on external developers for routine changes while still allowing for periodic collaboration with a consultant or firm for backend updates and enhancements as needed.

By transitioning to WordPress, StrongHearts seeks to create a more dynamic, sustainable, and culturally centered online presence that continues to uplift and support Native survivors. We are looking for a consultant or firm that understands the importance of cultural representation and can help us build a website that truly reflects the mission and values of StrongHearts Native Helpline.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant or firm will be responsible for the following:

1. Website Strategy & Planning

- Conduct a discovery phase to understand StrongHearts' goals, target audiences, and desired functionality, using both internal audits conducted by the Communications staff and the consultant's recommendations. Review the current website structure and content to identify opportunities for improvement and ensure alignment with StrongHearts' mission and user needs.
- Develop a site architecture and content strategy that enhances usability, navigation, and accessibility.
- Ensure the new website incorporates cultural representation through design elements, imagery, and storytelling.

2. Website Design & User Experience

- Create a modern, culturally centered design that resonates with Native audiences and aligns with StrongHearts' branding.
- Ensure an intuitive user interface that improves access to services, resources, and key content.
- Develop mobile-responsive layouts to ensure seamless functionality across all devices.
- Incorporate accessibility best practices (WCAG compliance).

3. WordPress Development & Functionality

- Build a fully functional WordPress website, ensuring easy content management for StrongHearts staff.
- Implement robust navigation and search functionality to help users quickly find resources.
- Set up a secure and scalable backend, including plugin selection, API integrations, and future expansion capabilities.
- Optimize the site for performance, speed, and SEO, improving visibility and engagement.
- Develop contact forms and any other required interactive features.

4. Content Migration & Integration

- Migrate identified content from the Kirby CMS to WordPress, ensuring accuracy and functionality while streamlining the site by removing unnecessary or outdated elements.
- Assist in content reorganization for better readability and user flow.
- Provide guidance on best practices for future content updates and sustainability.

5. Testing & Quality Assurance

- Conduct thorough testing for functionality, performance, and security before launch.
- Ensure compatibility across browsers, devices, and screen sizes.
- Address any bugs, glitches, or accessibility concerns before deployment.

7. Deployment & Post-Launch Support

- Oversee the launch of the new WordPress website, ensuring a smooth transition.
- Provide post-launch support to address any immediate issues or adjustments.

Project Deliverables

- New WordPress website with all agreed-upon features and functionality.
- Finalized site architecture and design elements.
- Content migrated and optimized for readability and SEO.
- Documentation for website management.
- Post-launch support for a defined period to ensure smooth functionality.

Timeline

This project requires an accelerated timeline, and the selected consultant/firm must be prepared to move quickly. Final deliverables are expected no later than September 1, with an earlier completion strongly preferred.

Qualifications & Requirements

The selected consultant or firm must meet the following qualifications:

- Proven experience in WordPress development with a strong portfolio showcasing website builds, migrations, and redesigns for mission-driven organizations, nonprofits, or similar sectors.
- Expertise in user experience and accessibility best practices to ensure the site is intuitive, inclusive, and functional across all devices.
- Demonstrated knowledge of SEO, performance optimization, and security best practices to improve website visibility, speed, and protection.
- Strong content migration experience, ensuring a seamless transition from Kirby CMS to WordPress while optimizing and streamlining site content.

- Ability to develop a user-friendly backend that allows StrongHearts staff to easily manage, update, and maintain the website independently.
- Cultural competence in working with Native communities, ensuring the website reflects and honors the diversity of American Indian and Alaska Native identities, traditions, and values.
- Experience working with local and national—Native and non-Native—nonprofit organizations or businesses in web development. Experience working with Native nonprofit organizations is a bonus.
- Capacity to meet a fast-moving project timeline, with final deliverables required by June 1 or earlier.
- Strong communication and collaboration skills, including the ability to work closely with StrongHearts' Communications team and incorporate internal feedback and audits into the redesign process.
- Preference will be given to candidates who demonstrate a commitment to cultural representation, nonprofit work, and digital accessibility.

Contract Terms

StrongHearts will negotiate contract terms upon selection. The terms of selection/hiring will be subject to the following terms. All contracts are subject to review by StrongHearts' legal counsel, and a project will be awarded upon signing of an agreement or contract, which outlines terms, scope, budget and other necessary items.

Review Criteria

Skill/Creativity [40%]

Please demonstrate your technical and creative capabilities through the submission of portfolio samples, including both completed and speculative projects that showcase your ability to execute similar web development and design work. Emphasize projects that highlight your expertise in user experience, accessibility, and cultural sensitivity, particularly those for mission-driven organizations or nonprofits.

- Please provide materials that demonstrate the full scope of services your firm offers, such as a briefing document, brochure, or other informative materials (note: links to company websites will not be considered/reviewed).

Resources/Capability [30%]

Please demonstrate your firm's capacity to handle this project through a brief, brochure, or other document that covers the following (note: links to company websites will not be considered/reviewed):

- Business experience: Years in operation, notable achievements, and areas of specialization.
- Staff skills and experience: Key team members who would work on this project, their qualifications, and their experience.
- Clients serviced: Notable clients in the nonprofit or mission-driven sectors, particularly those serving diverse communities.
- Projects of note: Relevant projects, particularly those involving WordPress, user experience design, content migration, or nonprofit work.
- Technical skills: Specific technologies, tools, or platforms your firm specializes in.
- Project management methodology: Approach to managing projects, timelines, and collaboration with clients.
- Ability to meet milestones: Examples of successful, on-time project completions.

References/Referrals [15%]

Please provide a list of at least three current professional references who can speak to your work on similar projects, particularly in web development and nonprofit sectors.

Pricing Structure/Rates [15%]

Please provide a comprehensive pricing and/or rate sheet for all potential services you might provide under this RFP agreement, including both upfront costs and any potential ongoing support services. Pricing should reflect the scope of work and the project's expedited timeline.

Proposal Requirements

The proposal must include the following information:

Cover Letter

- Indicate your interest in and qualifications to represent StrongHearts.

Agency Information

- Provide the agency's name, address, website, and telephone number.
- Include the name, title, and email address of the individual who will serve as your agency's primary contact during the RFP process.

Portfolio

- Include a portfolio showcasing past website development and redesign projects, particularly for nonprofits, mission-driven organizations, or culturally focused initiatives. The portfolio should highlight examples of user-friendly, accessible, and visually engaging WordPress websites you have built or redesigned. Please also include case studies or project summaries that demonstrate your approach to UX design, content migration, and technical execution. (Note: links to company websites will not be considered/reviewed.)
- Brief description and history of your agency and client list (past 36 months)

Client List and References

- Include a complete client list (past 36 months) with a minimum of five client references. Please provide a name, title, address, e-mail address and phone number for the contact person.

Pricing Structure/Rates

- Please provide a comprehensive pricing and/or rate sheet for all potential services you might provide under this RFP agreement.

Hourly Rates

- Include the hourly rate for work outside of the scope outlined by this RFP.

Proposal Guidelines

This is an open and competitive process for all qualified reputable communications firms. If the execution of work to be performed by your company requires the hiring of sub-contractors you must clearly state this in your proposal. Sub-contractors must be identified, and the work they will perform must be defined. In your proposal, please provide the name, address, and EIN of the sub-contractor. We will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of sub-contractors; however, we retain the right to refuse the subcontractors you have selected.

If you are selected to participate in a presentation with the selection team, you will be asked to present the information included in this proposal.

The deadline for proposals is April 25, 2025 at 5 p.m. CST. Submissions must arrive prior to the deadline. Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

Proposals must be submitted via email. All parts of an electronic submission must be submitted in PDF format. All components of proposals submitted via email should be saved in a single zipped folder.

Schedule of Events	Date
RFP release	March 25, 2025
Proposals due	April 25, 2025
In-person or video capabilities presentations	Week of May 5, 2025
Announcement of successful proposal	Week of May 12, 2025

RFP Response Due Date and Time:

April 25, 2025 at 5 p.m. CST.

Proposals should be addressed to:

Lori Jump

Chief Executive Officer

StrongHearts Native Helpline

Email: ljump@strongheartshelpline.org