



Request for Proposals

Digital Product Developer/Designer

December 13, 2022

Deadline for proposal submission:

January 17, 2023

5:00 p.m. Alaska Standard Time

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INTRODUCTION

Project Summary

The Fairbanks Native Association (FNA) seeks to contract with a digital product developer/designer to create and launch an engaging, interactive, web-based and portable application that supports learning the Denaakk'e (Koyukon Athabascan) language. Digital products to be created will build upon and enhance existing materials for 3-5 year-old students and families participating in FNA's Denaakk'e Dual Language Program. The target audience also includes the broader Alaska Native community and the general public.

The developer/designer (“vendor”) will see the product through its full life cycle from identifying technology constraints and concept planning through product testing, launch, and analytics, using a collaborative, iterative approach to ensure fidelity with the educational and cultural vision of the project. Required vendor capabilities include project management experience, excellent collaboration and communication skills, expertise in platform-independent programming languages for back-end and front-end development, and comprehensive user interface design expertise.

The work to be completed is funded by a two-year Native American Library Services Enhancement Grant (Grant Award number NAE-252406-OLS-22) from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). All project activities must be completed by August 31, 2024.

Company Information

Incorporated under the laws of the State of Alaska as a 501(c)(3) organization in 1967, FNA has served as an influential voice and trusted advocate for the Alaska Native community of Fairbanks, Alaska for more than fifty-five years. Since its founding, FNA has grown and diversified its services while remaining committed to its mission to “improve the quality of life for individuals and families by promoting justice, healing, and wellness in our community.” FNA’s vision is a “unified, healthy, and empowered Native community that embraces all cultures.” Today, FNA is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors, all of whom are Alaska Native and/or Native American.

FNA accomplishes its mission by providing culturally relevant and appropriate services through four major departments: Community Services, Behavioral Health Services, a Tribal Head Start/Early Head Start program, and a Johnson O’Malley (JOM) youth program. The proposed project will be administered under FNA’s JOM program with subject matter support from its Denaakk’e Language Program personnel and community elders.

SCOPE OF WORK

The project will promote Denaakk’e (Koyukon Athabascan) language revitalization by creating engaging, interactive digital language learning resources that are user friendly and publicly accessible. The digital product designer/developer (“vendor”) will collaborate closely with FNA personnel to create six engaging, interactive modules supporting Denaakk’e language learning. The final product will be a series of thematic modules that are developmentally appropriate for use by 3-5 year old children while appealing to beginning Denaakk’e learners of all ages. The expected themes, subject to

modification per FNA staff and elder language experts as need be, will be: 1) Personal Interactions and Emotions, 2) My Family Kinship Terms, 3) Colors and Numbers, 4) Animals, 5) Clothing and Weather, and 6) Food and Mealtimes. Module contents may include digital adaptations of existing physical learning materials, enhancement and re-envisioning of existing digital learning resources (see <https://www.fairbanksnative.org/?s=Denaakk%27e+language>), and brand new activities and resources proposed and developed under this project.

The products will incorporate text, photo, video, audio, and other graphic elements into an interactive user experience designed to provide opportunities for listening, responding, speaking, and reading in Denaakk'e. Language content and skills practice will be embedded within culturally relevant context that highlights Koyukon Athabascan people, culture, history, values, ways of knowing, and traditional practices.

The vendor must be able to manipulate and convert a variety of multimedia file types as necessary to meet product specifications. As a primary purpose of the project is to enhance and expand opportunities for learning Denaakk'e, audio recordings of Native speakers and students will feature prominently in the product. Ability to incorporate audio and/or short video files with other media in a user-directed and user-responsive experience is essential.

The vendor will be responsible for back-end and front-end development, ultimately integrating user interface and user experience (UI/UX) elements in order to create a visually appealing interactive product that supports dynamic and user-responsive functionality. The modules may include text, graphic, audio, and video assets, some of which may be selected and provided by FNA and some of which will be sourced and purchased by the vendor at the vendor's expense. The products are intended to be long-lived. Therefore, the vendor will be responsible for ensuring permissions and licenses associated with all component assets (e.g. purchased stock photos or illustrations) are permanent and not subject to subscription-based expiration dates.

Digital products will be made freely and openly available via the web and will also be made available for download from disk to allow use by educators or other members of the public whose internet connectivity does not fully support web-based product functionality. To maximize access by broad audiences, the product design will be responsive for use on a variety of devices, including computers, smart phones, and tablets and across operating systems.

Product requirements

By the end of the project period, six digital, thematic Denaakk'e language learning modules will be available to the public via the internet. The product must:

- incorporate text, video, audio, photo, illustrations, other graphic elements, and other rich media into a cohesive, visually appealing user interface and intuitive and friendly user experience
- provide for multiple types of interactive functionalities (e.g. by drag-and-drop, mouse clicks/touch screen selection, drop-down menus, user-responsive feedback) to support games, quizzes, and other user-directed learning activities
- facilitate frequent opportunities for listening, speaking, and reading Denaakk'e
- be responsive for use on computers, tablets, and smart phones
- be compatible with Mac OS, Windows, Android OS and iOS
- be fully portable (e.g. via a flash drive) to enable use in remote communities where internet service may be slow or unreliable, and/or on devices that are not enabled for internet access
- employ high quality graphics, which may include original, custom designed illustrations and/or stock illustrations
- include and represent only language and cultural content (including visual, text, and audio content) approved by FNA's Language Program Director or her designee
- allow for project staff and focus group participants to view and test a fully functional version of the modules before publishing for public access
- accommodate basic user analytics
- include a user feedback feature
- be accompanied by documentation and supported by training for designated FNA personnel responsible for product and platform maintenance and updates
- adhere to FNA's organizational and project-specific policies and procedures for protecting the likenesses and intellectual property rights of any Alaska Native elders, culture bearers, and other individuals or entities who contribute images and cultural and linguistic information

Project management

This work will be guided by FNA's Indigenous Language Program (ILP) Director, a fluent Denaakk'e speaker and career educator, who will determine the scope and sequence of digital content to be included in the product. The ILP Director will be the primary point of contact for communications related to product concept, design, development, testing, and refinement. FNA's Johnson O'Malley Program Director, the project director for the IMLS grant funding the work, will be responsible for managing the contract and ensuring that grant requirements for progress reporting are met.

The vendor may also interact with language program staff, FNA Communications and IT department staff, Alaska Native elders and culture bearers, and other project partners and stakeholders. The development process will require a high degree of collaboration and communication, with product content and vision driven by FNA and other subject matter experts and informed by ongoing focus group testing and user feedback. To facilitate effective communication throughout the project, the vendor must be skilled at translating technical language into lay person's terms and vice-versa.

It is essential that the vendor assign a dedicated project manager to serve as the primary point of contact with FNA and to be responsible for satisfactory implementation of the contract. Regular communication between the project manager and FNA staff may occur by email, phone, videoconference (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams), and/or in person, as established by agreement of FNA project staff and the vendor during the project planning phase.

The vendor will see the product through its full life cycle from identifying technology constraints and concept planning and design through product testing, launch, and analytics, using a collaborative, iterative approach to ensure fidelity with the educational and cultural vision of the project. Modules are expected to be completed sequentially, and time for focus group testing with target audience representatives identified by FNA will be ongoing during the contract period. Feedback from product testers will be discussed by FNA staff and the vendor to determine what changes are feasible and establish a timeline for module refinement.

The product(s) developed will be the property of FNA, and the vendor will be required to provide documentation of code and access to all linked assets such that FNA IT staff can make updates as needed and maintain functionality with evolving technology. Part of the vendor contract will entail providing training and support to FNA staff during the contract period to ensure product sustainability after the end of the contract period. Per grant guidance, the IMLS "reserves, for federal government purposes, a royalty free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work and authorize others to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work" created by this project.

The vendor must adhere to FNA and project-specific policies and procedures to ensure appropriate protections for culturally sensitive and/or personally identifying information associated with elders and other community members who agree to be featured in video, audio, or still image files or who provide oral or written content that is published as part of the product.

Project timeline and deliverables

The deadline for completing all project activities is August 31, 2024. Specific dates and duration of the contract will be established between FNA contracting staff and the vendor in the contract agreement. The first stage of the project will be dedicated to concept development and overall project planning, including establishment of a realistic timeline for completion of each project module. Thus, the timeline for completion and submission of deliverables, described below, will be determined by the mutually agreed upon timeline established by the contractor and FNA personnel during the planning stage.

Deliverables, to be submitted according to the timeline agreed upon during the project planning phase, will include:

- module mock-ups, storyboards, wireframes, and/or other development and design documents
- deployment of final product
- monthly and annual progress summaries to designated FNA point of contact
- comprehensive technical documentation to support ongoing maintenance and updates

Per IMLS grant requirements, data will be collected to measure the effectiveness, quality, and timeliness of project activities. Monthly progress reports submitted by the vendor to designated FNA personnel, documentation of recommendations for improvements and how and when such improvements were implemented, and an end user feedback feature are requirements for the project to meet grant conditions.

BUDGET

The total amount for this contract is not to exceed \$90,000 over the two-year project period. The vendor will invoice FNA for work performed as will be outlined in the contract agreement.

VENDOR REQUIREMENTS AND CAPABILITIES

Vendors who have the expertise, experience, and capacity to implement the project as described are encouraged to submit a proposal. At a minimum, vendors should possess the following capabilities and meet the following requirements:

Technical capabilities

- Strong computer programming skills; ability to create original code to create functionality according to established product specifications
- Knowledge and experience with platform-independent programming languages for back-end and front-end product development
- Demonstrated graphic design skills and expertise, including strong skills in Adobe Creative Suite and/or other graphic design programs
- Ability to create, manipulate, and convert multimedia file formats to meet product specifications

Project management capabilities

- Experience successfully seeing a digital product design product through from identifying technical requirements to concept development, design, testing and refinement, and deployment
- Excellent communication and collaboration skills, ability to work closely with individuals from other fields to complete a creative project
- Ability to meet deadlines and plan work accordingly
- Awareness of culturally sensitive information, intellectual property, and privacy considerations
- Experience working with Indigenous peoples on collaborative projects (Experience working with Alaska Native peoples, including elders, is a plus.)
- Ability to provide sufficient documentation and training to support product sustainability

Other vendor requirements

As a contractor under this grant-funded project, vendor must agree to comply with all applicable federal and state laws, orders and regulations and all certifications and assurances required under federal grant administration.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Respondents should submit proposals by email to Maria Berger at mberger@fairbanksnative.org **no later than 5:00 p.m. on January 17, 2022**. Proposals should be attached to the email in PDF or MS Word format, written in 12-point font, and limited to 10 or fewer single-spaced pages (8.5 x 11 inch). Please type "Digital Product Developer RFP" in the email subject line. Only electronic submissions will be considered.

Anticipated schedule

December 13, 2022	Request for proposals posted, submission period opens
January 17, 2023	Deadline for proposal submission: 5:00 p.m.
January 17-20, 2023	FNA contacts selected respondents
January 20-27, 2023	Interviews with selected respondents
February 3, 2023	Deadline for FNA to notify selected vendor
February 10, 2023	Deadline for signed contract agreement

Proposal content

Proposals should include the following information:

Company information

- company name, location, and contact information for principal
- company overview, history, and areas of expertise

Experience and qualifications

- project management / coordination experience and skills
- key staff who would likely be involved in the project and their qualifications, including knowledge of and skills with specific programming languages and design applications
- experience working with Alaska Native or Native American individuals or entities, if any
- experience developing similar educational applications, if any

Proposed approach

- proposed approach to completing the project, including how requirements described herein will be met

References

- names and contact information for at least three references, including name of project/product and brief description of work completed

Budget

- proposed budget, including basis for estimated costs

Selection Criteria

A proposal review committee will review submissions and contact selected respondents to schedule interviews. Selection of respondents will be based on capabilities for carrying out the work of the project, as evidenced by responses to content requested above, and the proposed budget. Evaluation will consider technical and project management abilities, as demonstrated by past work, qualifications/expertise, and proposed project approach.

CONTACT

Respondents may submit questions regarding this request for proposals by email or phone to:

Maria Berger
Lead Grant Specialist
Fairbanks Native Association
mberger@fairbanksnative.org
(907) 452-1648 x6241