



# **Task Order**

## **Allegheny County Analytics Site**

### **Project Description**

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) is seeking a web design partner to design and develop a new Allegheny County Analytics site. The new site should be user-friendly and comprehensive, with the capability to display different content types and meet the needs of multiple audiences and use cases.

The current analytics site, <https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/>, exists as a resource for research and information about Allegheny County. Allegheny County is a national leader in data science, predictive modeling and information collaboration across human service sectors. We work hard for this to translate to public information and transparency and look for new opportunities to best share data and information.

We are looking for a design partner to help create the best digital experience for users across devices. We want to work with a team who is willing to partner with DHS staff to understand the content being posted to the analytics site and how to best engage users.

### **Background**

The analytics site currently hosts a diverse set of content types, including:

- Long form and formal reports
- Data briefs
- Tableau dashboards
- Custom-built interactive data tools
- Open data sets
- Ways to contact DHS for specific data requests

The complicated and outdated design of the site often makes it difficult for users to access these resources, especially as we begin integrating newer forms of content (such as web stories,

maps, open data sets, etc.). We would like to design a website which can be easily and fluidly updated, is flexible to the future addition of new content types and clearly navigates users through the site.

The site is maintained and updated by the DHS Office of Analytics, Technology and Planning (ATP) and the Office of Equity and Engagement (OEE). While much of the information, dashboards, reports and data come from DHS, there are cross-agency collaborations which allow us to share information from other agencies such as the Allegheny County Jail, county and city police, and the Allegheny County Health Department. Multiple people contribute content to the site, which requires a flexibly designed site to accommodate content with different designs and purposes.

### **Expectations**

While we do have user experience (UX) designers, developers and writers on staff who could maintain and update the site, the successful applicant must:

- Speak to internal and external stakeholders (DHS staff and contracted providers) to understand the scope, users and future of the site
- Work with our internal team to design a site which is flexible and easy to update
- Analyze and understand how the site is being used and how it could be used to best distribute information

### **Technical Considerations**

- We want the ability to maintain content on the website without intervention from IT/technical staff. This is commonly achieved via a Content Management System (CMS), which would allow us to add, edit and remove content for the website through a web-based, secure administrative area. We are willing to consider any Microsoft Azure-compatible enterprise-level solutions. Our preference is WordPress, but we will consider a CMS with comparable characteristics.
- The website will be hosted by DHS on Microsoft Azure and must be built using compatible technology, including use of a CMS that is compatible with Microsoft Azure.
- The website must be built using Search Engine Optimization (SEO) best practices (logical navigation and architecture, keywords and meta tags, site maps, clean code, 301 redirects, etc.)

### **Award Details**

Based on what you know about this project, please propose an approach and estimated budget.

All parties who contract with Allegheny County must comply with our standard terms and conditions, available for review on our [Solicitations webpage](#). For more information, please section 7 in the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) under which you were qualified.

## How To Submit a Response

Respondents to this task order must be pre-qualified under the [RFQ for Design, Content and Digital Strategy](#).

Please respond to this Task Order by typing your responses to each requested item directly into this Word document. All inquiries and questions should be submitted via email to [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us). Your written Response should not exceed four pages.

Note that we will review the Application that you submitted to become qualified under the RFQ in conjunction with your response to this Task Order. Therefore, there is no need to duplicate information that you provided in that Application. Your Response to this Task Order should be specifically tailored to this project.

Submit your completed Response electronically to [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us) no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on DAY, DATE, MONTH, YEAR. You will receive an email when your Response is received. If you do not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting your Response, please contact [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us). If additional information is required after receipt of your Response, you will be contacted.

### Timeline

Task Order Issued: Friday, September 24, 2021

Response Deadline: 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday October 8, 2021

Estimated Award Decision: Wednesday, October 27, 2021

Estimated Start Date: Monday, November 8, 2021

## How We Will Evaluate Your Response

DHS will convene an Evaluation Committee to evaluate the Responses using the process described in the section 5 of the RFQ. The maximum score that a Response can receive is 50 points. The Evaluation Committee will assign scores to each Response by awarding points based on the following evaluation criteria:

- Successful track record with developing similar sites including creating user flows and personas, determining information architecture and site maps and iteratively prototyping (15 points possible)
- Proficiency in creating user experiences (UX) suited to specific audiences and similarly accessible across devices (10 points possible)
- Task Order Approach (25 points possible)

- o Proposed approach for the task order
- o Plan to adhere to and support [DHS values](#), including antiracism, inclusion and diversity
- o Plan to collaborate with and respond quickly to a variety of stakeholders within DHS
- o Achievable timeline for completion
- o Estimated budget

## Response

Respondent's Name: Bloom Works

*1. Provide example(s) of similar project(s). Include as many examples as you feel appropriate to meet evaluation criteria listed above and to sufficiently describe your experience: 1) creating user flows and personas, 2) determining information architecture and site maps and 3) iteratively prototyping. Feel free to include links or attachments. (15 points possible)*

Our team designed and developed a new, user-friendly, and responsive website for Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood (OEC). After receiving consistently negative feedback on their original website, OEC engaged Bloom and our partners at Skylight to reimagine their web presence. As part of our discovery process, we **interviewed end users and stakeholders, analyzed website analytics, and created personas to represent primary user groups** ([see attachment](#)). We used our research to identify a list of top tasks for searchers of the website, and then conducted a tree test with 44 participants to better understand our end users' mental models. This research powered the new site's information architecture, designed to help end users easily find what they're looking for. After the initial initial audience research, our engineers developed the new website using WordPress and open-source technologies. **Our guiding principles were to solicit feedback early and often from all user groups and to develop iteratively to incorporate feedback at each stage.** The end result was inspired by users, written in plain language, built with free technology, and created for non-developers to maintain over time. You can see [before-and-after screenshots of the redesign on our website](#).

We also worked with OEC to build a [user-friendly data collection tool](#) for childcare providers serving 15,000+ children. We employed many of the same UX research processes: interviewing users, creating personas, and developing features iteratively based on user feedback. After an initial pilot, we released the upgraded tool to over 400 state-funded providers in 2021. One of the end users called the new tool ["one of the easiest data portals ever."](#)

In a separate engagement, Bloom Works partnered with OpenCities (a SaaS website CMS provider) to help local governments make their information and services more accessible to users. Our content strategists worked in fast-paced, 2-week sprints to review analytics, conduct user research, and **develop detailed information architecture recommendations** for each website. Our tree tests highlighted how different average users seek content compared to government employees. We also learned through our testing that sites need more than one path to key information. You can read more about our project [in this case study](#).

*2. Briefly describe your approach to UX design and development that is suited to specific audiences and similarly accessible across devices. (10 points possible)*

We analyze, test, and iterate to make sure that everyone — including those with slow internet speeds, older devices, and limited literacy skills — can easily access and use the digital tools we create. As former government workers, we understand the unique challenges in the public sector and the importance of being fully responsive to your team and a diversity of stakeholders. We're skilled at distilling and incorporating multiple perspectives and needs when designing digital solutions. We ensure that all websites we build are mobile-responsive, include

content and navigation that's optimized for search, and that all government websites are compliant with federal accessibility requirements (ADA Section 508). For our non-government clients, we advocate strongly for the same high accessibility standards.

Once we've talked to stakeholders and end users, we take the information we learn to begin configuring the CMS and build prototypes. We test and observe the ways users and stakeholders interact with the technology to build on what works and learn from what doesn't. With each 2-week sprint, we'll build on the designated CMS to improve functionality and add in new features, culminating in a launch of a product that has been thoroughly field tested.

During the development process, we use technology to ensure that our products are broadly accessible. One focus area is cross-browser functionality, including compatibility with older browsers. We'll create scripts for tools like BrowserStack, which can scan the site across multiple browsers and devices for any issues.

As a company, we focus on accessibility and inclusion. As we design and develop, our work will align with the current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Along with testing, we conduct periodic manual reviews to confirm compliance. We see diversity and equity-building as integral to both our mission and our research practices. We're committed to disrupting the power dynamics and equity barriers in standard research practices by committing to the following: checking for bias when creating personas; recruiting researchers who reflect the demographics of targeted end users, when possible; and compensating research participants for their time and insight.

*3. Briefly describe your proposed approach the task order. Please include: 1) how you will adhere to and support DHS values, 2) how you will collaborate with a variety of DHS stakeholders, 3) your proposed timeline and 4) your budget. (25 points possible)*

### **Phase 0: Kickoff and Development of Strategic Framework (1 Week)**

During kickoff, we'll collaborate with your team to define a shared vision and devise a path forward that allows us to deliver on a regular cadence. We'll align on technical requirements and collaboration tools. We'll discuss the various audiences we should have in mind and solicit input from during the course of the project. We'll dive more deeply into DHS's values to better understand how you envision them being integrated into the project. During kickoff, we'll align on a stakeholder engagement plan that'll ensure **all** members of the team can contribute and are looped in to the plan and our progress.

### **Phase 1: Discovery (2 Weeks)**

In our discovery phase, we'll develop a research plan based on the goals we identified during kickoff. We'll review the existing assets and content you've developed and conduct some key user research with target audiences. **We'll identify what inspires you while solving for your business needs.** By talking with potential users of your website, we'll gather information about what they would want to see in the product. We believe compensating research participants is more equitable and leads to higher quality research, so we've participant incentives in the budget.

As part of discovery, we'll also conduct a technical audit. Based on what we know about the project, we believe WordPress — which is both cost effective and technologically simple — would be a suitable platform. That said, if we identify feature sets during discovery, we're well-versed in a variety of Content Management Systems (CMS). The CMS we select will enable the administrator to create roles with various permissions to control who can access, edit, and publish the content and modify layouts. It will also be able to host the content types you listed in the task order. We'll work alongside you to define these content types. We'll also begin setting up our technical environments.

In addition to our *technical audit*, we will summarize our findings from our *initial user research*. We will audit all existing content to identify what to migrate, revise, and remove. We will begin to draft *user personas*. We will begin to draft some brand guidelines, or review any guidelines you might already have.

## **Phase 2: Prototype (3 Weeks)**

Through the prototype phase, we'll develop wireframes and build out prototypes to test with users. Our emphasis will be on user flow and content. Prototypes help us refine new content, navigation, visualizations, and interactive tools.

We'll also begin to define the visual language of the site during this phase — not only **what** it will look like, but **why** it'll look the way it does. It's the combination of your desired aesthetic, the findings from our research and scans, what we know your audiences are looking for, and the voice we've developed for the product. The brand identity ties it all together and helps set the overall tone for users.

From usability testing, we'll add to and refine the product roadmap that will guide the technical work. As we hone the product requirements, we'll iterate on content and functionality, and provide a password-protected website so that your team and stakeholders can see progress, contribute, and become more familiar with the tools. We welcome and encourage DHS staff to embed with our team as we conduct user research, distill lessons from what we learn, and prototype solutions.

## **Phase 3: Iterate and Improve (3 Weeks)**

In this phase, we'll continue to build out feature sets you've outlined, identified, and agreed upon in discovery. This will be an interactive and iterative process. We'll continue to flesh out your brand identity and establish the design system. We'll iterate on the individual elements that make up your overall identity, eventually crafting the full visual narrative across your site and outreach channels. This process is where you'll see the identity spring to life, and it'll begin to take on its own personality.

We'll work closely with your team, communication staff, and vendors to align on and test the workflow, design, and content that most effectively meet your goals. We'll continue to refine the CMS based on usability feedback. We'll refine content and design style guides and provide other support as needed. We'll conduct training sessions for all appropriate parties. By this point, nothing will come as a surprise, and the end users of the site will already be familiar with what we've been building together.

#### Phase 4: Launch Full Site (2 weeks)

During this phase, we'll make sure everyone is aligned on the end product and that your team has the training and documentation you need. We'll conduct focused usability testing even after go-live has been completed. We will provide any post-launch support as needed.

#### Price Proposal

Phase	Deliverables	Total
<b>Phase 0: Kickoff</b> 1 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Kickoff agenda &amp; activities</li><li>● Kickoff summary</li><li>● Project plan</li></ul>	<b>\$6,210</b>
<b>Phase 1: Discovery</b> 2 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Initial sprint plan</li><li>● Research plan and schedule</li><li>● User research sessions</li><li>● Content audit</li><li>● User personas</li><li>● Set up development and production environments</li></ul>	<b>\$24,700</b> *Includes \$500 to compensate research participants
<b>Phase 2: Prototyping</b> 3 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Wireframes</li><li>● Working prototype(s)</li><li>● Brand identity options</li><li>● Findings summary</li><li>● Hypotheses for further testing</li><li>● Prototypical content types</li><li>● Beta site functionality</li></ul>	<b>\$43,050</b>
<b>Phase 3: Iterating &amp; Improving</b> 3 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Design system (iterative)</li><li>● Additional requested features</li><li>● Writing style guide</li></ul>	<b>\$57,600</b>
<b>Phase 4: Launch &amp; Continued Iteration</b> 2 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Production-ready site</li><li>● Site source code</li><li>● Content and design updates, as needed</li><li>● Finalized design system</li><li>● Web management toolkits, as needed</li></ul>	<b>\$24,100</b>
Total		<b>\$155,660</b>



## Example Personas from CT Engagement

### Families Persona 1

## New Parents (including new to CT)

### Goals on the website:

- Find out what the OEC is and what programs are offered/can help them.
- Find contact information.
- Primarily use the website to look up information (e.g. search for licensed care providers) or obtain more detailed information on a topic.
- Getting the necessary forms.
- Get guidance/find resources for child's development.

### Pain Points:

- Typically access the site from mobile devices, and the site is not responsive.
- Understanding programs, requirements, eligibility, etc.
- Finding the right contact information.
- Getting to the right satellite website.



### Provider Persona 1

## Licensed Group Child Care Home and Child Care Center Providers

This includes franchise day care centers or multiple program locations

### Goals on the website:

- The site's "power users" who have memorized the sometimes circuitous paths to get to the tools and information they need.
- Support parents and families in finding necessary forms and information
- Accomplishing a specific task necessary for their work
- Finding and signing up for recertification trainings
- Access, download, and print forms
- Look up/find specific information (ex/ background checks or regulations)
- Looking for OEC and program contact information

### Pain Points:

- Accessing the Registry with the Registry ID #
- Finding trainings for certifications and understanding requirements
- Easily accessible forms
- Finding relevant regulations
- Dealing with C4K (slow process and lack of clarity around acceptance and payment timeline) and other programs offered by OEC
- Amount of time to complete background check process
- Most providers are calling 211 or the # provided on communications for help/support in accomplishing tasks
- OEC not returning calls
- Would like to find teaching resources on OEC website



Provider Persona 2

## Licensed Family Child Home Care Providers



### Goals on the website:

- Accomplishing a specific task necessary for their work
- Sign up for provider trainings
- Access, download, and print forms
- Look up/find specific information (ex/ background checks or regulations)
- Looking for OEC and program contact information

### Pain Points:

- **Accessing the Registry with the Registry ID #**
- Finding trainings for certifications and understanding requirements
- Easily accessible forms
- Finding relevant regulations
- Dealing with C4K (slow process and lack of clarity around acceptance and payment timeline) and other programs offered by OEC
- Amount of time to complete background check process
- Most providers are calling 211 or the # provided on communications for help/support in accomplishing tasks
- OEC not returning calls
- Would like to find teaching resources on OEC website



Provider Persona 3

## Home Visit Providers



Goals on the website:

- Accomplishing a specific task necessary for their work
- Finding relevant regulations, especially benchmarks and grant information (State of CT Home visiting plan)
- Finding information about their/a specific **MIECHV** program
- Finding Home Visit programs (individual websites) or locations
- Signing up for provider trainings
- Making referrals

Pain Points:

- **Outdated information/broken links to resources for understanding MIECHV Benchmarks per year**
- Not clear what qualifications are - points users to call 211
- Not clear what the connections between programs are
- Most providers are calling 211 or the # provided on communications for help/support in accomplishing tasks
- OEC not returning calls



Provider Persona 4

## Relative Child Care Providers



Goals on the website:

- Accomplishing a specific task necessary for their work
- Sign up for provider trainings
- Access, download, and print forms
- Look up/find specific information (ex/ background checks or regulations)
- Looking for OEC and program contact information

Pain Points:

- **Finding trainings for certifications and understanding requirements**
- Easily accessible forms
- Finding relevant regulations
- Dealing with C4K (slow process and lack of clarity around acceptance and payment timeline) and other programs offered by OEC
- Most providers are calling 211 or the # provided on communications for help/support in accomplishing tasks
- OEC not returning calls
- Would like to find teaching resources on OEC website



OEC Staff Persona 1

## Help Desk/Complaint Desk Staff



### Goals on the website:

- Find answers on the website to answer specific questions from providers, parents, and advocates (related to process, forms, etc.)
- Identify each of the divisions of the OEC, what the division does, and a list of staff/contact info in order to route calls/questions.
- Overview of programs to direct people to the best resource within OEC
- Looking for terms, definitions, etc.

### Pain Points:

- Needs information to be up-to-date, accurate, and comprehensive
- Not a clear overview of OEC program offerings
- Not easy or clear to make referrals
- Not easy to find information quickly on the website
- Not easy to navigate quickly to programs and information



## Other examples of research personas created by Bloom:

- [Foster youth aging out of care](#) - engagement with [Think of Us](#)
- [Vulnerable resident personas \(pg. 23\)](#) - engagement with City of Springfield