

Meridian International Center

Website Redesign RFP

Vendor Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

August 2026 | For prospective RFP respondents

This FAQ consolidates recurring questions received from prospective vendors. It is intended to provide a common set of assumptions and clarifications to all respondents. Where the final technical solution has not yet been determined, vendors should make reasonable recommendations and clearly identify assumptions in their proposals.

Important: This FAQ supplements the RFP and does not replace it. Meridian may issue additional formal clarifications or amendments as needed.

1. Procurement, Submission & Contract Structure

Q: What is the proposal deadline?

12:00 AM on September 1, 2026

Q: Is there a formal Q&A period?

No, at this time Meridian is unable to reply to questions from interested vendors. We ask vendors to review this document and submit their proposals by the deadline. Meridian will follow up with candidates who are shortlisted on any questions they may have.

Q: What is the anticipated evaluation process?

Meridian anticipates reviewing written proposals, shortlisting finalists, conducting finalist presentations/interviews, checking references, and selecting a vendor for contracting. The anticipated project commencement is November 2026.

Q: Is there a public budget range or NTE ceiling?

Meridian has not established a public budget range or NTE ceiling for the base year or optional extension years. Vendors should provide transparent, phase-based pricing and clearly identify assumptions, exclusions, third-party costs, and potential change-order drivers.

Q: What is the contract structure?

The RFP anticipates a Time and Materials structure with a set not-to-exceed ceiling. Billing is expected to be tied to agreed project milestones and deliverables. Meridian is open to fixed or NTE pricing for discrete phases where that provides greater predictability.

Q: What do the three optional extension years cover?

The base year is intended to cover the core redesign/rebuild through launch and initial stabilization. The three optional extension years are primarily intended for ongoing support, maintenance, security/technical updates, optimization, UX/content enhancements, additional development, and other mutually agreed services.

Q: Should vendors price hosting and third-party licensing separately?

Yes. Vendors should identify hosting, software licensing and other recurring or pass-through costs separately from core project fees.

2. Project Scope, Timeline & Design

Q: Is this a redesign or a new website build?

Meridian is approaching the project as a fresh build rather than a one-for-one recreation of the existing site. The current website uses an aging technology stack and has become increasingly difficult to maintain. The new project should rethink information architecture, UX, content structure, and the technical platform.

Q: When does the project start and when should the new site launch?

Meridian anticipates beginning discovery in November 2026, with a target launch in approximately September–October 2027. The schedule is a preferred planning framework; vendors should identify risks or dependencies that could affect the target.

Q: Is there an immovable event driving the October 2027 launch?

The target is intended to provide a defined endpoint for the project and have the new digital platform operational within the 2027 program cycle. There is not currently a single event identified as an immovable launch deadline.

Q: How significant should the visual redesign be?

Meridian anticipates a substantial visual and user-experience transformation—approximately an 8–9 out of 10 in terms of design change. The new site should feel modern, sophisticated, credible, and highly usable while building from Meridian’s existing brand identity.

Q: Does Meridian have brand guidelines?

Yes. Existing Meridian brand standards and visual identity materials will be made available to the selected vendor. The vendor should translate the existing brand into a strong digital design system rather than simply reproduce the current site.

Q: Does Meridian have an aspirational website?

Meridian does not have one site it expects vendors to replicate. Vendors are welcome to recommend relevant institutional, nonprofit, international-affairs, cultural, or mission-driven examples that demonstrate strong UX, storytelling, search, events, and audience engagement.

Q: Will Meridian conduct user research?

Discovery should include audience analysis and validation of key user journeys. Meridian is open to stakeholder interviews, user interviews, usability testing, and other research where the vendor believes it would materially improve the strategy or design.

3. Content, Migration & SEO

Q: How much content is on the current website?

A comprehensive content inventory has not yet been completed, so Meridian does not currently have a definitive page/post/publication count for the RFP.

Q: Will everything on the current website be migrated?

No. The new site is not intended to be a page-for-page migration. The selected vendor will conduct a content audit and recommend what should be migrated, consolidated, rewritten, archived, or retired based on audience needs, content performance, relevance, duplication, SEO value, and the new information architecture.

Q: What types of content should vendors consider?

The content review should include pages, programs/projects, news and announcements, publications, events and event archives, fellows and people/profiles, PDFs/downloadable resources, images, videos, and other structured content.

Q: Who is responsible for writing new content?

Meridian staff will retain ownership of institutional subject matter and final content approval. The vendor is expected to provide content strategy and information-architecture support and may assist with rewriting, consolidation, UX writing, and development of new content. Vendors should identify substantial content-production services separately if they are not included.

Q: What is the SEO migration expectation?

Meridian expects a comprehensive SEO migration strategy. Vendors should inventory existing URLs, identify high-value content, map retained/consolidated content to new URLs, implement appropriate 301 redirects, and address metadata, internal linking, indexing, canonicalization, and other technical SEO considerations. Meridian does not require every existing URL to be preserved if content is appropriately retired or restructured.

Q: Are existing PDFs required to be remediated?

The RFP does not require all legacy PDFs to be remediated as part of the base website build. The selected vendor should assess the document library and recommend which materials should be migrated, recreated, remediated, archived, or retired.

4. CMS, Hosting, Accessibility & Security

Q: What CMS does Meridian currently use, and what CMS is preferred for the new site?

The current website is on an aging technology stack via WordPress. Meridian is not prescribing a new CMS. Vendors should recommend the platform they believe best supports usability, security, scalability, accessibility, content governance, integrations, and total cost of ownership. The RFP identifies WordPress, Drupal, or an equivalent user-friendly CMS as acceptable options.

Q: Who will host the new site?

Meridian does not require the new site to remain on its current hosting environment. Vendors should recommend an appropriate production hosting environment and identify hosting costs separately.

Q: What accessibility standard is required?

Meridian's minimum requirement is WCAG 2.1 Level AA. Accessibility should be incorporated throughout discovery, UX, design, development, content, and QA.

Q: Is an independent accessibility audit required?

The RFP does not mandate a specific independent third-party accessibility audit. Vendors should include comprehensive accessibility validation and remediation and may recommend an independent audit if appropriate.

Q: Is formal penetration testing required?

The RFP does not prescribe a specific independent penetration-testing requirement. Vendors should describe their recommended security-testing approach and identify any independent testing they recommend.

Q: Are offshore/international teams permitted?

Yes. International project team members may participate, subject to Meridian's security, privacy, data-protection, and access requirements. Vendors must identify team locations, roles, subcontractors, access controls, and relevant data-residency considerations.

Q: Can international vendors serve as the prime contractor?

Meridian is open to qualified vendors headquartered outside the United States. Vendors should identify the proposed contracting entity and any U.S. legal, tax, insurance, or contracting considerations.

Q: Can the project be delivered remotely?

Yes. Meridian anticipates that most of the engagement can be conducted remotely. In-person meetings or workshops may be requested where useful. Vendors should identify any travel or onsite costs separately.

Q: Can international team members access Meridian systems?

Remote access may be provided subject to Meridian's security and access-control procedures. Vendors should identify their proposed access controls, security practices, data-residency considerations, and technical requirements.

5. Salesforce, Splash, Donations & Marketing Operations

Q: How deep should the Salesforce integration be?

Meridian primarily anticipates website-level integration with its existing Salesforce environment—not a wholesale re-architecture of Salesforce. Anticipated use cases include website forms/contact submissions, newsletter/email audience acquisition, relevant contact/audience data, donation/fundraising activity as appropriate, and relevant event-related data.

Q: What Salesforce products/edition does Meridian use?

The RFP does not provide a definitive technical inventory of Salesforce products, clouds, custom objects, or existing API architecture. The selected vendor will assess the current environment during discovery and recommend the appropriate integration architecture.

Q: How is Splash used?

Splash is primarily used for event registration. The website should be the primary destination for event discovery and event-related content, while Splash remains the registration platform. The exact division of data and depth of integration will be determined during discovery.

Q: Does Meridian require API-level Splash integration?

Meridian is open to vendor recommendations. Vendors should identify whether they recommend embedded experiences, link/handoff approaches, APIs, or another architecture and clearly identify assumptions.

Q: What donation platform/payment gateway must be used?

Meridian requires the Stripe payment gateway. The current donation functionality operates outside the primary website. Vendors may recommend retaining the current approach or implementing a different solution based on usability, fundraising functionality, Salesforce integration, security, analytics, and cost.

Q: Are recurring donations, tribute donations, or donor-specific journeys required?

These are not currently prescribed as mandatory requirements. Vendors may recommend such functionality where it would materially improve Meridian’s fundraising experience and should distinguish required functionality from optional enhancements.

Q: Which email marketing platform must be integrated?

The specific email marketing platform is Salesforce's Account Engagement (formerly known as Pardot). The new website should support email/newsletter audience growth and integration with Meridian’s broader marketing operations. The selected vendor will assess the current environment during discovery.

6. Governance, Incumbent Vendor & Compliance

Q: Is there an incumbent website vendor, and can they bid?

Yes. Meridian has an incumbent digital/website vendor relationship, and the incumbent is eligible to participate in the competitive RFP process. Meridian intends to evaluate proposals using the same criteria.

Q: Will transition/knowledge transfer be available?

Meridian will facilitate reasonable transition and knowledge-transfer activities for the selected vendor, subject to access and availability. Vendors should identify the documentation, credentials, system access, and transition support they require.

Q: How will project decisions be made?

Meridian will designate a primary internal project lead to coordinate feedback and approvals. Project governance will establish appropriate owners for information architecture, content strategy, UX/UI, technical architecture, accessibility, content, UAT, and final launch approval.

Q: How many stakeholders will participate?

The exact number has not been finalized. Meridian anticipates participation from leadership, communications/marketing, programmatic teams, development/fundraising, events, and other subject-matter experts as appropriate.

Q: What are the data-protection requirements?

Selected contractors must adhere to Meridian’s Data Processing Agreement terms and applicable security/data-protection requirements. Vendors should identify any DPA provisions that materially affect architecture, staffing, hosting, subcontracting, or pricing.

Q: Does Meridian require SOC 2, ISO 27001, or another security certification?

The RFP does not currently establish a specific mandatory certification. Vendors should disclose relevant certifications, audits, security frameworks, and third-party assessments in their proposals.

Q: Why does the RFP reference NDAA Section 889 / FAR 52.204-25?

The RFP includes the referenced Section 889/FAR 52.204-25 language as part of Meridian’s procurement requirements. Vendors should identify any delivery-model or technology implications in their proposals.

7. What Vendors Should Include in Their Proposals

Because several technical and content questions will be resolved during discovery, vendors should clearly state their assumptions. Proposals should include:

- Recommended CMS and technical architecture, with rationale.
- Discovery and digital-strategy methodology.
- Information architecture, taxonomy, search, and content-model approach.
- Salesforce and Splash integration approach.
- Donation/fundraising recommendation.
- Content migration and SEO strategy.
- Accessibility and security approach.
- Hosting and third-party technology assumptions.
- Project team, including U.S. and international/offshore resources.
- Detailed project timeline and dependencies.
- Phase-level pricing, hourly rates, NTE/fixed fees where applicable, and recurring costs.
- Optional services and enhancements.
- Risks, exclusions, assumptions, and potential change-order drivers.

8. RFP Reference

The underlying RFP identifies a comprehensive website redesign with a user-friendly CMS, Salesforce and Splash integrations, ADA/WCAG 2.1 accessibility, SEO/performance improvements, security/data protection, training, post-launch support, detailed pricing, and a Time-and-Materials contract with a not-to-exceed ceiling and one base year plus three optional extension years.

The RFP also states that proposals will be evaluated on technical approach, relevant experience, price/cost reasonableness, accessibility/data protection, and timeline/staffing.

The project originated from the recommendation to start from scratch with a new site and archive the existing site because the current technology stack is very old and difficult to maintain

AT THIS TIME, MERIDIAN IS NOT ABLE TO RESPOND TO ALL INQUIRIES REGARDING THE RFQ. WE ASK VENDOR TO SUBMIT THEIR PROPOSALS AND WE WILL FOLLOW UP WITH CANDIDATES WHO ARE SHORTLISTED.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING.