

Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS)

Request for Proposals: Website Redesign and Development

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Contact	Professor Victoria Pagan
Email	nominating@camws.org
Website	https://camws.org

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I. Introduction

The Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS) invites proposals from qualified vendors for the redesign and redevelopment of the CAMWS website. The project encompasses a full redesign of the public-facing site, improvement of member portal functionality, and implementation of content management and conference registration systems suited to a scholarly association of our size. This document describes our organizational context, the current state of the website, the scope of work we are seeking, and the criteria by which proposals will be evaluated.

II. About CAMWS

Background

Founded in 1905, CAMWS is a regional learned society serving scholars, educators, and students of Greek, Latin, and classical antiquity throughout the Midwest and South, although our reach is in fact national. Current membership stands at approximately 1100. Members include higher education faculty (tenured, tenure-track, and contingent), K–12 teachers, graduate students, independent scholars, and emeriti.

Major Activities

CAMWS holds an annual spring conference at rotating locations throughout the region, and a Southern Section conference biennially in the fall. Its publications include the Classical Journal (CJ), Teaching Classical Languages (TCL), the CAMWS Newsletter, and the new American Journal of Classical Reception (AJCR). The association also administers grants and awards for students and faculty, supports professional development and networking, and advocates for classical studies in K–12 and higher education throughout the region.

RFP Review Committee

Proposals will be reviewed by the Secretary-Treasurer, members of the Executive Committee, and designated representatives. The Secretary-Treasurer will serve as the primary point of contact for vendors throughout the process.

III. Current State and Strategic Context

CAMWS has experienced a 25+% decline in membership since 2014, with biggest losses among new members. A survey conducted in 2025 identified the website as a significant organizational weakness, with members describing it as “dated” and “clunky”; the website creates a poor first impression and fails to serve members effectively. These shortcomings are particularly acute when it comes to recruiting early-career scholars and graduate students.

The specific problems are well-documented. The site’s design and user interface are outdated, and the site performs poorly on mobile devices. Navigation is difficult and the information architecture is cluttered. The content management system offers limited capabilities and requires more time and technical expertise than CAMWS staff can reasonably be expected to have. The member portal does not support the kinds of self-service functions members expect—renewals, profile management, conference registration—and the overall experience reflects poorly on the organization.

A modernized website is not a cosmetic priority. It is a prerequisite for the broader work of organizational renewal.

IV. Scope of Work

A. Initial Planning

The selected vendor will begin with a thorough analysis of member needs and pain points, potentially through a targeted survey, and will conduct stakeholder interviews with CAMWS leadership and staff. From this, the vendor will develop a project plan with a clear timeline and specific milestones for CAMWS review and approval.

B. Site Mapping and Audit

The vendor will conduct a full audit of the current website’s architecture and usage patterns, and will propose a redesigned site map and navigation structure for CAMWS review before development begins.

C. Visual Design

The vendor will develop a design system aligned with the CAMWS brand identity, including consistent navigation across all sections of the site, homepage and interior page designs, and responsive layouts optimized for both mobile and desktop. The design package should include a style guide for future content creation and classification, and the overall interface should be accessible to both site visitors and the CAMWS staff who will maintain it.

D. Development and Implementation

At the core of the redeveloped site is a content management system that allows the Secretary-Treasurer and designated staff to manage content without advanced technical expertise. The site must support a member portal with login, profile management, membership renewal, and directory access; conference registration with abstract submission, registration workflows, and payment processing; and a news and announcements section with an events calendar covering conference dates, submission deadlines, and related content.

Additional functional requirements include dedicated email addresses for officers, staff, committee chairs, and editors; a document library for grant applications, bylaws, and committee reports; website analytics providing traffic data and page-level performance information; and social media integration, on which vendors should advise regarding approach.

E. Content Migration

The vendor will develop and execute a migration strategy in consultation with CAMWS staff, covering full content transfer from the current site, URL redirect mapping to preserve existing links, and quality assurance testing throughout and following migration.

F. Training and Documentation

The vendor will provide training for the Secretary-Treasurer and relevant personnel, written documentation and user guides, and video tutorials for routine content management tasks.

G. Launch and Post-Launch Support

The vendor will conduct comprehensive pre-launch testing and provide active support during and immediately following launch, including a defined post-launch monitoring period with clear handoff terms.

H. Security and Performance

Ongoing responsibilities include regular security updates, automated backups, firewall and malware protection, and performance optimization including image compression and caching.

V. Technical Requirements

A. Accessibility

The public website must conform to WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards. Vendors must describe their accessibility testing methodology and remediation process. Content editors must be able to maintain accessibility compliance without requiring developer intervention.

B. Content Management

The system must allow authorized staff to create, edit, schedule, and archive content without technical assistance. Editorial workflows and permissions must support multiple staff roles.

The system must support structured content types for recurring content such as events, announcements, publications, awards, and committee information. The system must also support version history and content rollback.

C. Membership and Payments

The system must support online membership applications, renewals, renewal reminders, and dues payments. Payment processing must utilize a PCI-compliant third-party payment gateway. Staff must be able to generate reports on membership status, renewals, and payment activity.

Currently, membership records are managed manually, and membership purchases and renewals are processed by PayPal. Proposals should include integration with a membership management platform, such as Wild Apricot.

D. Data Ownership and Portability

The organization must retain ownership of all content, membership data, media assets, and configuration. Vendors must provide mechanisms for exporting all data in standard, documented formats. The organization must not be dependent on a proprietary platform that prevents future migration.

E Security and Compliance

Vendors must describe their security patching and vulnerability-management procedures. Administrative access must support multi-factor authentication. User roles and permissions must be configurable and auditable. Regular backups and disaster-recovery procedures must be documented.

F. Search and Discoverability

The website must provide site-wide search functionality. Vendors should describe any search technologies included in the proposed solution. Content must be structured and presented in ways that support discoverability through traditional search engines, AI-assisted search systems, and other automated indexing services. Vendors should describe how the proposed solution supports machine-readable metadata, semantic markup, and other practices that enhance content discoverability.

G. Performance

Public-facing pages should load in under three seconds under normal operating conditions. Vendors should describe caching, CDN, and performance-optimization strategies.

H. Future Sustainability

Vendors must describe the anticipated maintenance burden after launch. Vendors must identify any recurring licensing costs. Vendors must describe the expected upgrade path for the proposed platform over the next five years. Preference will be given to solutions that minimize long-term technical debt and reliance on specialized expertise.

VI. Vendor Qualifications

CAMWS is looking for a vendor with demonstrated experience designing and developing websites for nonprofit or membership-based organizations, ideally in the academic or scholarly sector. Vendors should have proven experience with the CMS platform they propose, as well as familiarity with member portal systems, conference registration, and payment processing.

Vendors must be able to provide ongoing post-launch support and maintenance and must have key personnel available throughout the project timeline. Proposals should include a portfolio of comparable completed projects and a minimum of three client references for engagements of similar scope. CAMWS reserves the right to request additional documentation or references at any stage of the review process.

VII. Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include an executive summary describing the vendor's proposed approach and relevant qualifications, and an organization and team section identifying key personnel by name with résumés and designating a single primary point of contact for all CAMWS communications.

Vendors should include a portfolio of comparable work with particular attention to academic or membership organizations, and a technical approach section describing the recommended solution for each project component with a clear rationale for platform and tool selection. A milestone-based project plan and timeline with interim deliverables identified, a content migration plan, and a description of the ongoing support model—covering scope, staffing, response time commitments, and pricing structure—are all required.

Proposals must include a minimum of three client references for comparable engagements with current contact information, and a cost proposal itemized by project phase, covering one-time development costs, any recurring hosting or licensing costs, and ongoing maintenance and support fees.

VIII. Submission Instructions

How to Submit

Proposals should be submitted electronically in PDF format to Victoria Pagan at nominating@camws.org. The subject line should read: “CAMWS Website RFP — [Vendor Name].” The proposal deadline is Friday, October 30, 2026. Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis as received.

Questions

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to Victoria Pagan at nominating@camws.org. Responses to substantive questions will be distributed to all parties who have expressed interest.

Confidentiality

All proposals will be treated as confidential by CAMWS. Vendors may be asked to execute a non-disclosure agreement before receiving non-public information about current CAMWS systems.

IX. Terms and Conditions

CAMWS reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive informalities, and to accept the proposal deemed most advantageous to the organization. This RFP does not constitute a commitment by CAMWS to award a contract, and costs incurred in preparing and submitting a proposal are the sole responsibility of the vendor. CAMWS may negotiate with more than one vendor simultaneously. Any contract resulting from this RFP will be subject to CAMWS standard terms and conditions and applicable law.