

The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library in Minnesota Seeks WordPress Redesign and Development Services

Estimated Budget: $30,000 - $35,000
(Estimate based on roles, tasks, hours, and hourly rates calculated by Upscale Method)

November 18, 2026 by Chris Johnson

Client: The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library
Industry: Nonprofit, Education, and Community Services
Location: Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA
Deadline: January 18, 2027

Project Overview

The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library, a nonprofit organization based in Minnesota, is seeking a qualified web agency to redesign and develop its existing website, www.thefriends.org.

The organization supports libraries through fundraising, advocacy, educational programs, and community engagement. Its goal is to create a modern, accessible, and user friendly website that better represents its mission while making it easier for visitors to find information, participate in programs, donate, and engage with the organization.

The Friends has already completed an evaluation of its existing website and developed a Website Redesign Blueprint outlining recommendations for navigation, content organization, and website structure. The selected agency will use this Blueprint as a starting point while providing its own design and development expertise.

The project includes a complete WordPress redesign, content refinement and migration, third party integrations, and ongoing hosting and technical support.

The organization is targeting a website launch in **June 2027**.

Estimated Budget: $30,000 - $35,000
(Estimate based on roles, tasks, hours, and hourly rates c/o Upscale Method)

This is an independent estimate, not an official budget provided by the client. Ongoing hosting and support costs are separate.

Key Features and Scope of Work

1. WordPress Website Redesign and Development

- Redesign the existing website using WordPress and Beaver Builder or a similar page builder.
- Create a modern, responsive, and accessible design following the organization's brand standards.
- Improve website navigation, information architecture, and overall user experience.
- Develop reusable page layouts that staff can easily update without technical assistance.

2. Content Organization, Copywriting, and Migration

- Review and reorganize existing website content based on the provided Blueprint.
- Refine and rewrite content in collaboration with the organization's team.
- Consolidate outdated, duplicate, and unnecessary pages.
- Migrate relevant content and media to the redesigned website.
- Preserve important existing URLs through appropriate SEO redirects.

3. Minnesota Book Awards Website Features

The Minnesota Book Awards program requires a dedicated and more extensive section within the website.

- Create dedicated pages for award submissions, judges, events, and award information.
- Develop a searchable and filterable archive of past winners and finalists.
- Organize award records by year and category.
- Support existing submission, payment, and event reservation processes.
- Make the awards archive easier for staff to maintain and update.

4. Integrations and Website Functionality

- Event calendar functionality.
- Blackbaud Raiser’s Edge NXT compatibility for donations.
- Mailchimp integration for email subscriptions.
- Integration with the organization's existing accessiBe subscription.
- Password protected document portal for the Board of Directors.
- SSL/TLS security and accessible website design.

5. Website Hosting and Ongoing Support

The selected agency must also provide separate Service Level Agreements for ongoing hosting and technical support.

Full hosting and support, including Google Analytics reporting, is required for the main website.

Limited hosting and support are also required for three additional websites:

- librarystrategiesconsulting.org
- mnwritersdirectory.org

- mnwritersmap.org

The agency should provide separate pricing for the initial redesign and ongoing hosting and support services.

Project Details

Client: The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library

Client Address: 2610 University Avenue W, Suite 530, Saint Paul, MN 55114-1043, USA (address published on the organization's contact page)

Website: https://thefriends.org

Questions Deadline: December 11, 2026

Proposals Deadline: January 18, 2027

Expected Vendor Selection: February 16, 2027

Target Website Launch: June 2027

Contact Information

Name: Not specified in the RFP

Position: RFP / Website Redesign Contact, The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library

Email: info@thefriends.org

Phone: 651-222-3242 (organization's published general phone number)

Proposal Submission: All questions and proposals must be submitted electronically to info@thefriends.org.

For proposals, use the subject line **Proposal: Website Redesign**.

For questions, use **Question: Website RFP**.

The organization will evaluate agencies based on their understanding of the project, relevant experience, proposed approach, budget, timeline, and ability to provide ongoing maintenance.

Interested agencies should include their company background, proposed approach, detailed project cost, separate hosting and support pricing, timeline, portfolio, and three client references.

Experience working with nonprofit organizations and WordPress website redesign projects would be particularly relevant.

This could be a good opportunity for Minnesota based web agencies with experience in WordPress development, nonprofit websites, and ongoing website support.

The organization already has a clear direction for the redesign, so agencies can focus on turning that plan into a functional, accessible, and easy to manage website.

If this project fits your agency's experience and capabilities, take some time to review the full RFP and its Website Redesign Blueprint before preparing your proposal.

Full RFP and Official Posting:

https://thefriends.org/2026/11/16/request-for-proposals-website-redesign/

NOTE: See the RFP below for the complete proposal submission instructions. Please review all the requirements carefully to determine whether this project is a good fit for your agency.

Chris Upscale Johnson
Web Agency Success Coach
Lead Generation
UpscaleMethod.com

See the RFP below:

https://thefriends.org/2026/11/16/request-for-proposals-website-redesign/
Request for Proposals: Website Redesign

November 16, 2026

OVERVIEW

The Friends is requesting proposals for a full website redesign of www.thefriends.org(opens in new tab) as well as service level agreements for ongoing hosting and support services. We are seeking a vendor who can create a site that reflects our mission and values, supports our different work areas, and welcomes visitors of all kinds to engage with us in ways that are tailored to their needs.

The Friends recently completed a strategic evaluation of our existing site and partnered with our current developer to create a Blueprint with suggestions for reorganizing the information and architecture for a new site. We are looking for a vendor who can build on and implement these ideas. More information is below.

ABOUT THE FRIENDS OF THE SAINT PAUL PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Friends acts as a catalyst for libraries to strengthen and inspire their communities. An independent, nonprofit organization established in 1945, The Friends invests in Saint Paul Public Library through fundraising, advocacy, and programming. The Friends also serves libraries across the country through its consulting services, Library Strategies, and promotes literacy, reading, and libraries statewide as the Library of Congress's designated Minnesota Center for the Book. We welcome community members to participate and contribute to our mission in ways that are personally meaningful to them. This may include donating money, answering our advocacy action requests, or attending author programs.

PROJECT GOALS

Design and build a new website that reflects The Friends' organization and structure, welcoming visitors to learn, engage, and support our work.

Create a user-focused experience that is clean, easy to navigate, and customizable to visitors' goals.

Consolidate and refine current content that has accumulated over the years.

Ideally, have the new site up and running June 2027.

What the Website Must Do Well

Clearly explain the role of The Friends. Make it easy for visitors to understand how The Friends supports Saint Paul Public Library and how fundraising, advocacy, programs, and impact connect.

Connect programs to our mission. Use program and event pages as opportunities to clearly explain the role The Friends play and to invite ongoing relationships beyond a single interaction.

Make primary actions obvious and easy. Ensure visitors can quickly find and complete key actions such as donating, buying tickets, signing up for email updates, or submitting materials.

Support ongoing staff ownership. Allow staff to update content confidently and consistently without requiring technical intervention for routine changes.

How We Will Know the Redesign Is Successful

Visitors can quickly understand what The Friends does and how it supports the library.
Donations, ticket purchases, email signups, and submissions are easy to find and complete.
Program and event pages clearly lead to broader understanding and engagement with The Friends.
Staff can update and manage content without relying on technical support.
Legacy and unused pages no longer define or make up the bulk of the site's structure.
For more information on our suggestions for site organization referenced in the Overview above, refer to Appendix A: The Friends Website Redesign Blueprint. This document reflects a strategic process and approach that staff continues to endorse, but it is intended as a guide rather than explicit direction. The chosen web team should build on the ideas presented and feel free to suggest alternate solutions during the design process, if applicable.

AUDIENCE

Because The Friends serves multiple audiences, people will visit our site for many different reasons. The new website should welcome each person and offer a seamless experience tailored to individual needs and level of familiarity with our organization.
People who visit the site may be:
Only partially familiar with The Friends work and ready for more information.
Familiar with Friends programs like Minnesota Book Awards, but not with the fundraising and advocacy pillars of our work.
Ready to take an action like donating, getting involved with advocacy, or attending our annual Opus & Olives gala

SCOPE OF WORK

Full, responsive site design thefriends.org, using The Friends' brand standards and Website Redesign Blueprint as a guide
Copywriting based on brand language and in partnership with Friends team
Site migration
Ongoing hosting and *full* support (Service Level Agreement), including Google Analytics reporting, for Friends site
Ongoing hosting and *limited* support (Service Level Agreement) for our three other owned sites:
https://librarystrategiesconsulting.org/(opens in new tab)
https://mnwritersdirectory.org/(opens in new tab)
https://mnwritersmap.org/(opens in new tab)

DESIGN NOTES

The Friends' brand standards should guide the visual design; however, we are open to suggestions for complementary colors and styles that may not be in the current palette to maximize accessibility.
The Friends produces the annual Minnesota Book Awards (MNBA) program that recognizes local authors and their work. While this is only one piece of our work, it requires a larger web presence than some of our other work areas to:
Manage annual book submissions and fees

Accept applications for judges
Manage free streaming reservations through Blackbaud form to annual Ceremony (tickets are through venue)
Showcase featured finalists and winners
Serve as an archive of past finalists and winners
Appendix A includes more information on MNBA content and navigation.

FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The new site should include the following elements:
WordPress platform
BeaverBuilder or similar page builder plugin
Event calendar function
Compatibility with Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT for donations
Required security features, including SSL/TLS
Mailchimp integration
Integration with Accessibe plugin (apply current subscription)
Accessible design elements like contrast, font size considerations, and limited use of pdfs
Portal for Board of Directors (password protected place for documents)
Archive function with filtering for past winner/finalist authors of Minnesota Book Awards

CONTENT MIGRATION

The current site is hosted on our web provider's Flywheel account and will need to be migrated to a new host should we select a new firm.
Select current pages should be redirected to maintain SEO.
Plugins should be evaluated and deleted or carried over, depending on decision.
See proposed page structure, etc. in Appendix A.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Strategic alignment with goals
Relevant experience, including nonprofit websites
Approach and methodology
Budget and timeline
Post-launch support and maintenance

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must include the following elements in this order:
Company Information: A description of the company and core services, organization capacity (staff size, location), years in business, how the company invests in community, and bios of key team members who will work on the project.
Project Overview: A written description of how you'd approach this redesign that demonstrates understanding of the project's goals and components, as well as the point of view / vision which will inform your approach to this work.
Cost: The cost of design services and separate service level agreement for ongoing hosting and support.
Timeline: A preliminary timeline, including the revision process, noting our preferred launch time of June 2027.
Portfolio: Examples of website redesign projects, preferably of other nonprofit organizations.
References: Three references from past clients.

Only firms located in Minnesota will be considered. While not required, respondents are encouraged to identify if they represent an enterprise owned and/or operated by women, people of color, or other groups that have been historically excluded from the benefit of full participation or consideration in this type of business opportunity or venture.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

December 11, 2026: Deadline to submit questions

December 18: Answers to questions posted on Friends' website(opens in new tab)

January 18, 2027: Proposals due

February 8 – 12: Interviews of three finalists

February 16: Selected vendor notified

Please submit all questions and proposal materials electronically to info@thefriends.org. Please use the subject line "Question: Website RFP" or "Proposal: Website Redesign" for your respective emails. Firms can request Word or PDF versions of this RFP and Appendix A via email, if desired.

Appendix A: The Friends Website Redesign Blueprint

Website Blueprint Overview

This document serves as a strategic and practical blueprint for redesigning The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library website. It is intended to be used as a shared reference by staff, designers, developers, copywriters, and decision-makers to ensure that the redesign is grounded in the organization's goals, reflects how people actually engage with the site, and results in a website that is clear, usable, and maintainable over time.

The blueprint brings together audience insights, navigation and page structure, content and template guidance, migration and cleanup recommendations, and technical considerations. Rather than prescribing exact designs or copy, it defines the framework within which those decisions should be made. As the site is redesigned, this document should be used to guide prioritization, clarify ownership, and evaluate trade-offs, helping ensure that individual decisions support a coherent whole.

Why This Redesign Is Happening Now

In discovery conversations, the team consistently described the same set of challenges with the current website:

Content has accumulated over many years without a clear organizing structure, leading to fragmentation and duplication.

Pages were created for one-off needs (events, campaigns, internal use) and never fully cleaned up.

The site is hard to update and difficult to maintain, especially when making changes to existing pages.

Many visitors arrive through programs or events and struggle to understand who The Friends are or what to do next.

Technology and usage behaviors have evolved since the site was originally developed.

The purpose of the redesign is to address these issues by creating a site that is easier to manage internally and clearer, more intentional for external audiences.

Audience Philosophy and Page Writing Framework

The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library website serves many different audiences, but it is intentionally designed around meeting readers where they are, not around trying to speak to everyone at once.

Many visitors arrive through activities such as programs, events, or the Minnesota Book Awards. At the moment they arrive, most are not yet fully oriented to The Friends as an organization, and many are not ready to donate or advocate immediately. The website's primary job is therefore not to push for immediate transactions, but to:

Serve participation clearly and without friction

Help curious visitors understand who the Friends are and why our work matters

Build trust and legitimacy over time

Keep people connected until they are ready to take deeper action

For visitors who are still learning or lightly involved, the **primary conversion goal is email subscription**, not donation. Email is the main mechanism for building understanding, reinforcing impact, and inviting deeper involvement over time.

Visitors who are already motivated and ready to act, such as those attending Opus and Olives, donating, or engaging in advocacy, should encounter **focused, low-friction pages that respect their intent and help them move forward efficiently**.

To support this, every page on the site should be written using **one of four page approaches**. These approaches are not rigid personas, but practical writing modes that help copywriters decide how much explanation, persuasion, and urgency is appropriate on each page.

Page Writing Approaches

These approaches describe the reader's mental posture, not whether the page contains information. A page can be information-heavy and still be task-oriented, or factual without being educational.

1. Learn (Understanding and Trust-Building)

When to use this approach

Use this approach when the reader is curious, lightly involved, or newly introduced to the Friends and needs orientation before committing.

Writer's mindset

Assume curiosity, not commitment. Help the reader understand who the Friends are, what role they play, and why it matters, without pressure to act immediately.

Primary goal

Build understanding and trust, and invite continued engagement.

Primary call to action

Join the email list / stay informed.

Guidance

Lead with clear, plain-language explanations

Prioritize clarity over persuasion

Keep calls to action low-pressure

Avoid

Leading with donation asks

Dense history or internal detail

Assuming the reader already cares deeply
Typical examples: Home, About, Programs overview, Minnesota Book Awards landing (Friends context sections)

---

2. Know (Information Retrieval and Reference)

When to use this approach

Use this approach when the reader already understands the context and is simply trying to find specific information.

Writer's mindset

Be clear, structured, and neutral. The goal is accuracy and scannability, not persuasion.

Primary goal

Help the reader quickly locate and confirm information.

Primary calls to action

View, browse, filter, find.

Guidance

Prioritize headings, lists, and filters
Write for scanning, not narrative flow
Avoid unnecessary explanation or framing

Avoid

Persuasive language
Emotional framing
Over-contextualizing

Typical examples: Calendar listing view, Minnesota Book Awards winner and finalist listings, program listings

---

3. Do (Execution and Task Completion)

When to use this approach

Use this approach when the reader has already decided to participate and needs to complete a specific task.

Writer's mindset

Get out of the way. Help the reader complete the task as efficiently and clearly as possible.

Primary goal

Enable participation with minimal friction.

Primary calls to action

Attend, submit, register, buy tickets, or participate.

Guidance

Be direct and task-focused
Surface logistics and next steps quickly
Minimize secondary messaging

Avoid

Long mission explanations

Competing calls to action
Interrupting execution with fundraising language
Typical examples: Event detail pages, submission and ticketing pages, Calendar, Minnesota Book Awards role pages, submission and ticketing pages

---

4. Decide (Decision Support for Meaningful Commitments)

When to use this approach

Use this approach when the reader is already somewhat convinced and is deciding whether to make a meaningful commitment, often involving money or sustained support.

Writer's mindset

Respect the reader's seriousness. Provide the information and reassurance needed to support an informed decision, without overselling or unnecessary urgency.

Primary goal

Support a thoughtful decision and reinforce confidence.

Primary calls to action

Donate, sponsor, advocate, or commit.

Guidance

Be focused and substantive
Explain impact and outcomes clearly
Keep the action prominent while providing supporting context

Avoid

Broad organizational re-introductions
Emotional pressure tactics
Distracting secondary calls to action
Typical examples: Capital Campaign, Opus and Olives (sponsorship and major ticket sections), advocacy action pages, major giving pages

---

Usage Guidance

Every page should be assigned **one primary page approach**: Learn, Know, Do, or Decide.
When in doubt, ask:
Is this page helping someone understand?
Is this page just information to be known or referenced?
Is it helping them do something?
Or is it helping them decide whether to commit?
This framework is intended to guide copywriting, design, and future content decisions so the site remains focused, readable, and effective over time.

Navigation Menus

Super Menu (utility navigation)

About
Calendar
Shop
Minnesota Book Awards

St Paul Library
Library Consulting
Contact

Main Menu (primary navigation)
Programs (Participate)
Advocacy (Advocate)
Fundraising (Support)
Donate

Footer Menu (column-based navigation)
Programs & Events
Programs Summary (Programs)
Calendar of Events (Calendar)
One Book One Minnesota
Fitzgerald in Saint Paul
Fireside Readings
Opus & Olives Gala
Minnesota Book Awards

Organization & Impact
About
Staff and Leadership
Impact and Financials
Advocacy
Support the Library (Fundraising hub)
Donate
Capital Campaign
Contact

Other Links
Blog
Stay Informed
The Friends Shop
Saint Paul Public Library
Library Consulting
Privacy Policy
Terms of Service

Navigation Menus: Minnesota Book Awards (sub site)
Main Menu (header navigation)
Be a Judge
Submit a Book
Buy Tickets

Learn More About the Friends (returns to the main Friends website)

_____

Primary Navigation (tile menu)

The tile menu is the primary navigation system on the Minnesota Book Awards landing page. Each tile routes to a dedicated section of the MBA sub-site, organized by how different visitors engage with the awards. The role label can appear on the tile, but the tile's headline should communicate the content promise.

Readers: Finalists and Winners

Judges: How the Book Awards Are Judged

Creators: Submit a Book

Attendees: Ceremony and Events

Supporters: Donate & Promote

What is changing

Today, past Minnesota Book Awards winners and finalists live on a single page with tabs, decades, and expandable sections. This is difficult to update, hard to browse, and limits how the information can be displayed.

Going forward, the archive will be organized around award categories by year, rather than one large, complex page.

Each award category for each year will have its own entry behind the scenes. Visitors will experience this as a clean, searchable grid where they can:

Browse awards by year

Browse awards by category

See current finalists and winners highlighted clearly

The goal is to make the archive easier to maintain and easier for the public to explore, without requiring the creation of hundreds of individual book pages.

Thank you for reading this post, don't forget to subscribe!