

Request for Proposals: Food is Medicine Institute Website Redesign

1. Organization Overview

The Food is Medicine Institute (FIMI) is a first-of-its-kind academic institute at Tufts University, directed by Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian, a globally recognized cardiologist and nutrition scientist who has authored more than 600 scientific studies. FIMI's vision is a world where consumption of nutritious food is recognized as a fundamental component of health and health care, and where all people and communities have the knowledge, resources, and support to achieve optimal health and health equity through nourishing food.

Food is medicine (FIM) is the practice of using nutritional interventions, such as medically tailored meals, produce prescriptions, and medically tailored groceries, as a core component of healthcare. FIMI's research shows that \$24 billion could be saved annually if all eligible patients received medically tailored meals, that 20% of hospitalizations could be averted for adults receiving medically tailored meals for six months, and that produce prescriptions could prevent 121,000 cardiovascular events in eligible adults over 10 years. This is the work the new site must communicate clearly to the health leaders and policymakers who have the power to act on it.

The Institute is home to a team of 20+ specialized experts (researchers, physicians, dietitians, analysts, and policy strategists) and collaborates with dozens of leading organizations globally. Our work spans six focus areas:

- **Evidence:** Clinical trials and program development
- **Practice:** Preparing clinicians for food is medicine in clinical settings
- **Policy:** Advocacy and research translation for policymakers
- **Convening:** Cross-sector events and coalition-building
- **Innovation:** Public implementation tools, databases, and novel research assets
- **Business Case:** Building the economic evidence for food is medicine programs

The current FIMI website is at tuftsfoodismedicine.org. Vendors are strongly encouraged to review it before submitting a proposal.

2. Project Background & Goals

2.1 Why We Are Redesigning

Built in 2023 when the Institute was newly formed, the current website has not kept pace with FIMI's growth. It functions as a static content repository — cluttered navigation, academic-facing page templates, no impact synthesis, and no clear pathway

for the healthcare leaders and policymakers we most need to reach. The redesign is an opportunity to build a site that reflects the Institute as it is today.

2.2 Goals for the Redesigned Site

The redesigned site must:

- Tell a narrative story: Position FIMI as the data-backed global leader in food is medicine from the first screen. Surface impact at every level — high-level statistics, policy wins, and human stories.
- Serve our primary audiences first: Healthcare leaders and policymakers are the primary audiences; Section 3 describes their needs and ideal journeys in detail
- Be visually dynamic and engaging: Use rich media like data visualizations, video, photography, and data as primary storytelling tools. The resulting site should feel alive, not static.
- Elevate the work and its impact: Synthesize research outcomes for our key audiences rather than listing them for academics; make the real-world application of every project legible to a health executive or a legislative staffer.
- Be disciplined about what belongs on the website: Prioritize the content that serves visitors from our primary audiences, particularly those coming to our site for the first time. The vendor should help FIMI make informed, data-driven decisions about content scope during discovery

3. Target Audiences

3.1 Primary Audiences

The site as a whole is designed for two primary audiences. Every page, every design decision, and every content structure should be evaluated through their eyes first.

Primary audience	What they need to understand	Key action we want them to take
Healthcare leaders (health system executives, hospital and clinical leadership, health plan leadership)	Food is medicine programs are cost-effective and clinically proven. Implementing them is feasible. FIMI has the evidence, the tools, and the implementation expertise to support them.	Pilot or scale a FIM program; reach out to partner on research or program design
Policymakers & government staff (federal and state legislators, agency staff, policy advisors)	FIMI is the trusted, nonpartisan academic source on food is medicine. The evidence is rigorous, applicable to real policy decisions, and ready to be cited and acted upon.	Incorporate FIM provisions into legislation, regulation, or guidance; access policy tools and briefings; engage FIMI for technical assistance

3.2 Audience Journeys

For the redesigned site to serve its primary audiences, it must guide visitors through a logical, purposeful experience. The following describes the proposed journey for each primary audience. Vendors should use these as design briefs for how the site's architecture, navigation, and individual pages work together.

Healthcare Leader Journey

A health system executive or clinical director lands on the home page and immediately understands: poor diet is driving costs and poor outcomes, and food is medicine is a proven, scalable response. Within two clicks they can find:

- Evidence that FIM programs reduce hospitalizations and cut costs, presented in a language that meets their needs
- Real-world examples of programs that have worked, including relevant FIMI research and partner implementations
- Implementation resources: tools, clinical guides, and education resources
- A clear path to engage directly with FIMI

Policymaker Journey

A legislative staffer or agency official lands on the home page and immediately understands: FIMI is the credible, nonpartisan academic authority on food is medicine. Within two clicks they can find:

- Key evidence summaries written for a policy audience
- Examples of legislation, regulation, and guidance that have been rooted in FIMI research
- Policy-ready resources: briefs, testimony, public comments, events, and other evidence of our maturity in the space
- A path to request a briefing, access tools, or connect with the policy team

4. Scope of Work

The selected vendor will be responsible for the full redesign and development of the FIMI website, including site architecture, UX/UI design, front-end and back-end development, content migration (in collaboration with FIMI staff), and launch support.

We are not looking for a vendor who will execute a checklist. We want a thought leader in web design and information architecture who will push us to make every page more engaging, more useful, and better suited to our two primary audiences: healthcare leaders and policymakers.

This RFP describes what we know we want. But we expect the vendor to come to the table with additional ideas for page layouts, content structures, interaction patterns, and design decisions we haven't thought of. If you look at our current project pages, you will find dry, text-heavy templates built for an academic audience. We do not want this replicated. We want you to challenge those templates and propose something a health system executive or a legislative staffer would actually read.

For every major page type, we expect the vendor to bring a point of view on how to make it work for a healthcare leader or a policymaker who is landing on it for the first time. Proposals should demonstrate this thinking.

4.1 Taxonomy & Content Relationships

A robust tagging and taxonomy system is a core technical requirement. Content on the FIMI site does not exist in silos; projects connect to people, publications, resources, videos, and news. The backend must make these relationships easy to create and maintain, and the frontend must surface them automatically so visitors always have a path to related content.

The website must support interconnectivity between the below categories/content types:

- Projects
- Focus areas
- Team members
- Publications
- Resources
- News/media stories
- Videos
- Program type

In practice, this means: a project page automatically surfaces related team members, publications, resources, news, and videos; a team member's profile page shows their associated projects and publications; a publication page shows its related project and contributing team members; and filtering on collection pages works across these taxonomy fields.

The vendor is responsible for architecting this system and for ensuring it is intuitive for non-technical staff to maintain. Proposals should describe the recommended technical approach in detail.

Findability Strategy

The vendor is expected to develop and document a findability strategy that brings together the site's navigation, search, taxonomy, and content linkages into a coherent system. This is a required deliverable from the discovery phase.

The findability strategy should address:

- **Site search:** Scope, configuration, and how search results are ranked and presented; how a policymaker searching for 'produce prescription evidence' or a health executive searching for 'medically tailored meal cost data' would experience results
- **Taxonomy-driven navigation:** how content tags and filters enable visitors to move laterally through the site (e.g., from a project page to related publications, resources, and team members) without relying solely on top-level navigation
- **Audience entry points:** how the primary audiences can reach the most relevant content from any point in the site, not only from the home page

4.2 Platform & Technical Requirements

The site will be hosted on Tufts University's Pantheon account, which supports both WordPress and Drupal. We are open to either CMS and ask vendors to recommend which they propose to use and make a clear case for that choice in their proposal.

Non-technical staff self-sufficiency is the primary consideration. FIMI's team has little technical background and must be able to add content, update pages, manage publications and projects, and maintain the site independently after handoff without writing code. Vendors should describe specifically how their proposed CMS and editorial interface (e.g., page builder, block editor, or equivalent) enables this, and what the day-to-day content management experience looks like for a non-technical user.

Additional technical requirements:

- Mobile-responsive design across all screen sizes
- Accessible design — WCAG 2.1 AA compliance minimum, consistent with Tufts University's digital and web accessibility standards (access.tufts.edu/digital-web-accessibility)
- Fast load times and Core Web Vitals optimization, including for pages with embedded video and data visualizations
- Site-wide search functionality
- SEO best practices throughout, particularly for audience-targeted terms relevant to healthcare leaders and policymakers searching for food is medicine evidence and policy tools

4.3 Design Requirements

The redesigned site must feel visually dynamic, modern, and credible, consistent with FIMI's standing as a leading academic institute. It should prioritize imagery, video, and data visualizations over blocks of text.

Pre-Development Design Strategy

Before any design mockups or development work begins, the vendor is required to produce a design strategy document. This document synthesizes the requirements, audience framework, communication goals, and design preferences described in this RFP into a clear creative direction. It should address at minimum:

- **Visual direction:** how the site's aesthetic approach will serve the primary audiences and reflect FIMI's credibility as a leading academic institute
- **Structural approach to key page types:** particularly the home page, project pages, and Impact section
- **Content hierarchy principles:** how impact, credibility, and audience relevance will be communicated at the page and section level throughout the site
- How the redesigned site differs from the current state and why those differences serve FIMI's goals

FIMI will provide up to two rounds of consolidated feedback on the design strategy before design work begins.

Design Inspiration: The Rockefeller Foundation

We are drawn to the visual approach and organization of rockefellerfoundation.org and ask vendors to study this site before proposing. Specific elements we want to emulate:

- Full-screen dynamic hero bold headline, minimal text, one or two clear CTAs, with background video or dynamic data visualization
- Animated impact counters that tick up on scroll to make statistics feel alive and significant
- Structured narrative sections where each major focus area gets a number, a bold title, a short paragraph, and a video or image
- Mega-menu navigation with a brief orientation statement at the top of each dropdown
- Recent news module with clean, date-stamped entries near the bottom of the home page

Design Inspiration: Global Bread Intake project

We are also drawn to the visual elements on a recently published site for a FIMI-affiliate project, the [Global Bread Intake initiative](#). Its emphasis on dynamic data visualizations and responsive scroll is something we want to emulate.

We are not asking for a copy of either site. We want the same level of visual dynamism and editorial confidence applied to FIMI's content, identity, and audiences.

Additional design requirements:

- Adherence to Tufts University brand guidelines, publicly available at brand.tufts.edu/guidelines, covering color palette, typography, logos, lockups, cobranding, and voice and tone. Vendors should review these before proposing and confirm compliance in their proposal.
- Photography: FIMI has a library of existing professional photos that will be made available to the vendor, supplemented by licensed stock imagery.
- All pages should have at least one visual element beyond text (image, video, chart, or data callout)
- Data visualizations and charts where relevant, particularly on the Impact section pages

4.4 Module & Integration Requirements

- **Social media feed:** display recent FIMI posts from LinkedIn on the home page
- **Newsletter signup integration via Mailchimp:** a prominent signup on the home page using a compatible plugin or module
- **Video embed support:** YouTube and Vimeo embeds that are fast-loading and visually integrated
- **Analytics:** Google Analytics 4 integration
- **Data compliance:** Cookie consent management in compliance with applicable privacy regulations

4.5 Content Migration

The vendor will be responsible for migrating existing site content to the redesigned site. Not all current content will carry forward. During the discovery phase, the vendor will work collaboratively with FIMI staff to audit existing content, determine what should be migrated, updated, or retired, and develop a migration plan consistent with the overall project schedule. FIMI staff will make final decisions on content retention.

Content type	Approx. volume	Notes
Projects	~30	Active and completed; some may be retired
Publications	~200	Academic papers
Team member profiles	~25	Names and titles; photos, bios, and affiliated content to be added
Resources	~30	Toolkits, guides, data tools, CME materials
Events	~12	Summits, webinars, and briefings
News & media	~60	Media coverage, press releases, related news
Videos	~15	Event recordings, media stories (significant overlap with above content types)

The vendor's migration responsibility is to transfer existing content cleanly into the new templates and tagging structure.

4.6 Project Governance

Points of Contact

Julia Sharib will serve as the day-to-day point of contact for all vendor communication. Strategic decisions and major design approvals will be made with oversight from FIMI's Managing Director and Director. FIMI will also coordinate with Tufts University's central marketing team to ensure the site adheres to university brand guidelines; vendors should anticipate that some design decisions may require sign-off from university communications.

Revision Rounds

FIMI expects two rounds of revisions per major project milestone. Major milestones include site architecture, design mockups, and development staging. Consolidated feedback will be delivered within seven business days of each deliverable. Requests outside the two-round limit will be scoped and priced separately.

Site Transition

The current FIMI website (tuftsfoodismedicine.org) will remain live throughout the development process. The redesigned site will launch as a hard cutover; the current site will be sunset on the day the new site goes live.

4.7 Training & Documentation

A complete set of screen-recorded video tutorials is a required deliverable. These will serve as the long-term reference manual for FIMI staff making edits to the site after launch. Tutorials must cover all key editing tasks a non-technical staff member would reasonably need to perform. At minimum:

- Updating homepage content: hero text, featured statistics, spotlight section, news module
- Adding and editing publications, including summaries and tags
- Adding and editing projects, including tagging team members, publications, resources, videos, and news
- Adding and updating team member profiles and headshots
- Adding news and events posts
- Updating the Stories page, adding new video features or narrative case studies
- Managing the newsletter signup and social media feed plugin or module settings
- Using the taxonomy system to tag and relate content across the site

Videos must be recorded using the actual production or staging site, clearly titled, and delivered in an organized, accessible format. Proposals should confirm tutorials are included in scope and describe how they will be delivered.

4.8 Post-Launch Support

A post-launch intensive support period of one full calendar quarter (three months from launch date) is a required deliverable. During this period the vendor must:

- Resolve any bugs, broken elements, or functional issues that emerge post-launch at no additional cost
- Respond to non-critical issues within two business days; critical or site-blocking issues within the same business day
- Provide guidance to FIMI staff as they begin managing the site independently

This support period should be structured flexibly. While bug fixes and technical maintenance are the baseline, FIMI anticipates that some support hours may be directed toward design or content adjustments, for example, reworking a page layout that is not performing as intended, refining a template based on real content, or addressing issues that emerge as the team begins using the site in practice. Proposals should describe how support hours are tracked and allocated and confirm that the support scope is not limited to technical issues alone. Proposals may also include pricing for an optional ongoing support retainer beyond the initial quarter.

5. Project Timeline

The project is targeted to launch in January 2027, following the December holidays. FIMI's internal prep work is underway in Q2 2026. Vendor engagement begins in July 2026, allowing approximately six months of active development time. Proposals should include indications of how and where FIMI non-technical staff and student support can be leveraged to help maintain timelines.

Proposals must include a project schedule from contract execution to launch. Please specifically assess the feasibility of a January 2027 launch, flag any risks, and describe how you would manage them.

6. Budget

We are not publishing a budget range for this engagement. We ask vendors to propose a cost based on the scope described in this document, with a clear breakdown by phase or deliverable.

7. Proposal Requirements

Please submit proposals in PDF format to Julia Sharib at Julia.reedy@tufts.edu by **July 25, 2026**. Questions will be answered on a rolling basis in [the consolidated Q&A document](#).

7.1 Organizational Background

- Brief description of your firm or practice and your relevant areas of expertise

7.2 Relevant Portfolio

- 3–5 examples of comparable website redesign projects, ideally in academic, nonprofit, health, or policy sectors
- Links to live sites with a brief description of scope and your specific role on each project
- Examples that demonstrate visual dynamism, rich media use, or complex information architecture are especially welcome
- A client contact name, title, and email address we may reach out to as a reference for each

7.3 Design Thinking: Sample Page Concept

This is a required section. After reviewing the current FIMI website, please include a brief concept (wireframe, sketch, or written description) for how you would redesign one of our project pages. The current project pages are text-heavy and academic-facing. Show us how you would approach this page for a health system executive or a

policy maker — what information would you surface, how would you structure it, what visual elements would you include, and how would you make the real-world relevance of the work immediately clear. This section is how we will evaluate whether a vendor is a true design thought partner. This does not have to be a finished design.

7.4 Technical Approach

- CMS recommendation: specify whether you propose WordPress or Drupal, and make a clear case for that choice in the context of this project. Your rationale should directly address how your proposed CMS and editorial interface enable a non-technical team to add content, update pages, manage publications and projects, and maintain the site independently after handoff without writing code.
- Confirmation of Pantheon deployment experience and your approach to hosting on Pantheon
- Recommended approach to implementing the taxonomy and content relationship system described in Section 4.1
- SEO strategy: recommended plugin or module and keyword approach for healthcare leaders and policymakers searching for food is medicine evidence and tools
- Findability strategy: site search configuration, filtering, and cross-content pathways (see Section 4.1)
- Approach to content migration given the volumes described in Section 4.5, including whether migration can be programmatic or will require manual work
- Any other plugins, modules, or integrations planned
- Approach to mobile responsiveness and accessibility (WCAG 2.1 AA / access.tufts.edu/digital-web-accessibility)
- Strategy for Core Web Vitals performance optimization, including for pages with embedded video and data visualizations
- Confirmation that your proposed design complies with Tufts University brand guidelines (brand.tufts.edu/guidelines), covering color palette, typography, logos, lockups, and cobranding
- Approach to the pre-development design strategy document (required deliverable per Section 4.3): how you will synthesize RFP requirements, audience framework, and creative direction before any mockups begin, and how you typically structure feedback on this deliverable

7.5 Process & Collaboration

- Name the specific individuals who will work on this project given the August 2026 start date.
- Typical project workflow from kickoff to January 2027 launch
- How you handle the two-revision-round process for major milestones, including your expected turnaround time for deliverables

- Your recommended approach for the launch cutover and sunset of the current site
- How you will coordinate with FIMI's day-to-day contact
- Approach to training and documentation: confirm screen-recorded video tutorials are included in scope and describe how they will be delivered
- Post-launch support: describe how support hours are tracked and allocated during the one-quarter post-launch period, and confirm that the support scope is not limited to bug fixes and technical issues alone (see Section 4.9)

7.6 Preparing for This Project

Please describe how you expect FIMI to organize and prepare for this engagement. Be specific: what will you need from us, and at what stage? What decisions, materials, or approvals are most critical for keeping the project on schedule?

Also describe the most common ways that client-side teams inadvertently create delays or friction in projects like this, and what you would recommend FIMI do to avoid them. This section will help us evaluate whether your proposed process is realistic given our team size and structure, and will help us prepare to be a productive partner from day one.

7.7 Project Timeline

- Proposed schedule from contract execution (mid-August 2026) to January 2027 launch
- Key milestones, dependencies, and assumptions
- Specific assessment of whether a January 2027 launch is feasible, and what risks exist
- Indicate where and how FIMI non-technical staff or student support could be leveraged to assist with the project and help maintain timelines

7.8 Budget

- Detailed cost breakdown by phase or deliverable, including taxonomy development, design strategy document, post-launch support, and video tutorials
- Pricing model (fixed-fee, time-and-materials, or hybrid)
- Optional add-ons listed separately

8. Process & Terms

8.1 Intellectual Property

Upon full payment, all deliverables produced under this engagement, including design files, code, templates, and documentation, become the sole property of Tufts University. The vendor retains no license to use, resell, or redistribute any FIMI-specific deliverables without written permission.

8.2 Reservation of Rights

FIMI reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technicalities, to negotiate with multiple vendors, and to select the proposal deemed most advantageous to the Institute. This RFP does not constitute a commitment to award a contract.

8.3 Confidentiality

All proposals will be treated as confidential. Vendors should clearly mark any information in their proposal they consider proprietary.