



**The PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship**  
Managed Retail Marketplace Service Solution

**Request for Proposals**

This RFP is for the front-end design and launch of a managed retail Marketplace service solution. The ideal Marketplace proposal will be a hosted platform that is a SaaS customized for one url specific to the PA Wilds Center's brand needs, a commission-based model and feature robust Marketplace functionality.

**RFP Sent:** February 28, 2020

**Responses Due:** March 30, 2020 (COB)

Send any questions on the RFP to: Abbi Peters, EVP Creative Commerce, [apeters@pawildscenter.org](mailto:apeters@pawildscenter.org)

Send proposals to: Abbi Peters, [apeters@pawildscenter.org](mailto:apeters@pawildscenter.org)

**Budget:** \$70,000

**Goal for site launch:** April 2021 (work to occur between April 2020 and April 2021 and will include Maker Marketplace onboarding and site testing)

**About Our Organization**

The PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship, Inc. (PA Wilds Center) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to integrate conservation and economic development in a way that strengthens and inspires communities in the Pennsylvania Wilds.

Many local partners are involved in the effort to grow the region's nature and heritage tourism industry under the Pennsylvania Wilds brand. The PA Wilds Center is the coordinating entity among these partners. The Center also operates programs and services for communities, which include The Wilds Cooperative of PA value chain, PA Wilds Licensing, Community Character and Natural Resources Stewardship, Regional Marketing, PA Wilds Champion Awards, and Youth Entrepreneurship. The Center's work is sustained through partnerships, program fees, philanthropic giving, government grants, and entrepreneurial activities related to the Pennsylvania Wilds brand.

The Pennsylvania Wilds, one of the state's 11 official tourism regions, is a large rural area that covers about a quarter of the Commonwealth and is home to about 4 percent of the state's population. The 12 1/2 –county landscape is known for its 2.4 million acres of public land -- more than Yellowstone National Park. It also boasts two National Wild & Scenic Rivers, the largest wild elk herd in the Northeast and some of the darkest skies in the country. It has a rich oil and lumber heritage, and a vibrant maker community working across a variety of mediums whose unique products allow visitors to "take home a piece of the Pennsylvania Wilds."



Before creating your proposal we encourage all vendors to become familiar with our organization's programs, mission and vision.

- Learn more about the PA Wilds Center: [www.pawildscenter.org](http://www.pawildscenter.org)
- See how we market the region: [www.pawilds.com](http://www.pawilds.com)
- Browse our value chain of product and experience makers: [www.wildcsopa.org](http://www.wildcsopa.org)
- Or take home a piece of the Pennsylvania Wilds: [www.ShopthePAwilds.com](http://www.ShopthePAwilds.com)
- Read our 2018-2020 Strategic Plan [here](#).

## About This Project

As identified in the PA Wilds Center's 2018-2020 Strategic Plan, the long term goal of the Center is to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem tied to the region's lifestyle brand and public lands that moves \$4 million annually in local products and services and helps rural businesses and communities to thrive.

We are excited to be launching an online Maker Marketplace to support this growing ecosystem.

The selected vendor will be responsible for building a robust Maker Marketplace tied to the Pennsylvania Wilds brand where Makers can manage and sell from their own "shop". Allowing each Maker to upload their own product images and descriptions, sell quantities based on their available stock, and drop ship from their locations. The system will be set up so that the PA Wilds Center will earn a small commission on each sale; however, the Makers control product selection, quality, and shipping.

This platform will be working in tandem with other projects to help our entrepreneurial ecosystem grow, including our professional development cohort - [PA Wilds PACE](#), the opening of the [PA Wilds Media Lab](#) and expansion of our brick-and-mortar presence with a new location at [Leonard Harrison State Park](#).

PA Wilds Center is seeking a vendor that is willing to build a relationship around our Marketplace with a shared vision of building local wealth, investing in underserved communities, and helping to strengthen market opportunities for rural entrepreneurs.

This project is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) to accelerate the growth of the Pennsylvania Wilds entrepreneurial ecosystem.

## Project Scope

Under this proposal, the PA Wilds Center is looking to contract with a vendor that can execute the following four project phases:

**Phase 1 Identify and Prioritize Requirements** Together, with the PA Wilds Center, define the scope of work, priorities, and finalize the project timeline, work plan, and administrative roles. Define site functionality and identify any new requirements, prioritize and any additional costs. With the PA Wilds Center, develop



Marketplace governance, create rules that govern customer service levels and seller performance to maintain control over the PA Wilds Conservation Shop's Marketplace and brand.

**Phase 2 Build and Train** The Vendor will provide wireframes and facilitate conversations with PA Wilds Center. Center marks needs and provides digital assets. The Vendor develops front-end design, creates integrations and tests.

**Phase 3 Test and Launch** With PA Wilds Center, Vendor will test site, begin onboarding makers, creating training materials for PA Wilds Center staff (training the trainers) and new Makers.

**Phase 4 Post Launch** Review and prioritize open tickets, identify and fix bugs, prioritize additional services and requirements for funding and establish outline for long term relationship between Vendor and PA Wilds Center.

### **Maker Marketplace Objectives**

1. Strengthen an emerging industry cluster: This platform will provide businesses involved in The Wilds Cooperative of PA (WCO), the Center's rural value chain, an additional market opportunity.
2. Facilitate/promote market access for regional goods and services: Between 2020-2023 PA Wilds Center projects doing \$1.4M in gross sales of regional products from its value chain through its physical and online Maker Marketplace locations.
3. Foster resilience and prosperity: Provide additional market opportunities for businesses across the PA Wilds to help diversify the region's economy and spur job and wealth creation opportunities for regional small businesses.

### **Current E-Commerce Platform**

Our current e-commerce site, [shopthepawilds.com](http://shopthepawilds.com), is run using Shopify (also the point of sale system for our brick and mortar stores). The site only sells products that are in inventory at our physical location, the PA Wilds Conservation at Kinzua Bridge State Park. Having to purchase and store inventory capacity limits the amount and variety of products we can have on hand. Creating a Marketplace that enables Makers to manage their own inventory will allow for greater product variety and more opportunities for more Makers. Shopify will continue to be our brick and mortar point of sale system, but once the Marketplace is launched, Shopify will no longer be used for online sales.

### **Maker Marketplace Functionality Requirements**

Marketplace success is hinged on active engagement amongst Makers and shoppers. The Marketplace should be designed with growing our community of Makers and engaging our users as a priority. Our Maker Marketplace will be designed to provide both retail and wholesale opportunities. Only members of the Wilds Cooperative of PA, our value-chain network, will be eligible to sign up as Makers to sell through the Marketplace.



#### Marketplace requirements for launch:

- Commission-based model
- Provide the PA Wilds Center access to an Admin Console, allowing for communication with Makers via email notifications and marketing tool integrations (such as MailChimp), as well as sales and traffic dashboards
- Vendor provided platform hosting and maintenance with periodic updates and upgrades
- Encrypted and secure merchant processing
- Customized storefront to sell and recommend Maker products, with the ability to add rich blog content with product links
- Maker portal, with seller dashboard to access sales, shipping, listing management, and manage profile content
- Wholesale portal, with seller dashboard to access sales, shipping, listing management, and manage profile content
- Fluid and responsive design between desktop and mobile devices
- Maker profiles
- Location & product type search
- Customer Reviews
- Customer Loyalty Program
- Messaging, both maker to maker and maker to customer

#### Services to be managed by the Vendor:

- Seller payments, W9's and 1099-K's
- Seller certificates of insurance
- Marketplace Tax Collection, reporting, and remittance according to each state's legislation
- Applications and term agreements
- Accounts to increase sales conversions
- Sales and use certificates
- Initial onboarding of Makers (up to 200), and train PA Wilds Center Staff for future Maker onboarding

#### Additional projects/priorities:

- Integration with Shopify (to allow products from current Shop to be sold in the maker marketplace)
- Booking & scheduling, we would like to allow experience based businesses (outfitters, guides, etc.) as well as creative industry partners the opportunity to sell their services through the marketplace.
- Single Sign On integration with our membership platform

#### **Budget Details**



As listed in the summary, our budget for this project is \$70,000. While we, of course, prefer the most cost-effective solution, all proposals that fall reasonably within this budget will be considered and weighed based on their merits. Companies are not required to be located in Pennsylvania, but their location in or proximity to the Pennsylvania Wilds will be considered. Proposals that offer flexibility in billing for non-required elements added to the marketplace after the initial launch will also be considered.

## Proposal Requirements

Please submit your RFP in pdf format to [apeters@pawildscenter.org](mailto:apeters@pawildscenter.org) by COB March 30, 2020 (files over 2MB should be sent using a Dropbox or similar file share method). Include the following in your proposal response:

- **Contact Information:** Provide all relevant contact information for your company.
- **Statement of Interest:** Why is your company the right choice for this project?
- **Experience:** Interested parties shall have a minimum of 2 years of experience performing work. Please briefly describe relevant experience for this project.
- **Similar projects:** Provide links to recent marketplace projects.
- **References:** Please provide the name, phone number, email and a brief description of the nature of the professional relationship for three references.
- **Solution & Timeline:** Explanation of your proposed platform and services, broken into phases with the accompanying timeline, from kick-off to post-launch.
- **Who are you?** Provide details about your team. Are there any key differentiators about your company?
- **Quote:** Provide pricing per phase with optional services/projects line-itemed. Include long term servicing fees, the commission cost for makers, and how PA Wilds Center will make revenue from the marketplace.

## RFP & Project Timeline Details

**RFP announced:** February 28, 2020

**RFP Questions deadline:** March 13, 2020. Interested firms may send their questions to Abbi Peters, [apeters@pawildscenter.org](mailto:apeters@pawildscenter.org) on or before March 13 (questions will be responded to within 48 hours).

**Responses Due:** March 30, 2020

**Winner Selected & Contacted:** April 10, 2020

**Project Kick-off:** April 17, 2020

**Launch Target Date:** April 30, 2021