

CASTLETON UNIVERSITY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT
JOHNSON STATE COLLEGE
LYNDON STATE COLLEGE
VERMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE



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**Vermont State Colleges
Request for Proposals**
*VSC Online Programs Website
September 23, 2020*

Proposals due:
Friday, October 2, 2020
5:00 PM Eastern Time

1.0 Organizational History

1.1 General Information

The Vermont State Colleges (VSC) is Vermont's system of public higher education. The colleges are located throughout Vermont and include four institutions:

- Castleton University
- Community College of Vermont
- Northern Vermont University
- Vermont Technical College

Together the colleges enroll more than 11,000 students of all ages and backgrounds; students come from Vermont, the U.S., and around the world. The colleges offer more than 125 academic programs at the certificate, associate, baccalaureate, and master levels. All offer small classes and individualized attention for students.

1.2 Mission Statement

For the benefit of Vermont, the Vermont State Colleges system provides affordable, high quality, student-centered and accessible education, fully integrating professional, liberal, and career study.

This integrated education, in conjunction with applied learning experiences, assures that graduates of VSC programs will:

1. Demonstrate competence in communication, research and critical thinking;
2. Practice creative problem-solving both individually and collaboratively;
3. Be engaged, effective, and responsible citizens;
4. Bring to the workplace appropriate skills and an appreciation of work quality and ethics;
5. Embrace the necessity and joy of lifelong learning.

The Vermont State Colleges system provides continuing educational opportunities for individuals to meet their specific goals.

2.0 Project Description

The Vermont State Colleges system seeks proposals for the design of an integrated website based on the WordPress CMS. The design will increase the brand awareness of the VSC and the programs of its institutions. The goal is to provide a searchable directory of online and hybrid programs offered by member institutions. It will demonstrate the breadth of available course and program offerings, and continuum of educational opportunities between institutions.

The overarching priorities are to create a new site to provide a resourceful, informative, user-friendly environment that supports easy access to a comprehensive list of institutional programs. The general website design and elements will include accessibility, usability, appeal, functionality, and ease of incorporating future features. The functionality should allow for filtering of programs or courses by

meaningful criteria, like degree level, area of study or semester offered. There must be a standardized format and graphical look for all pages, establishing a unified theme throughout the website while maintaining branding of member institutions where appropriate. The navigation must be clearly visible, intuitive, and accessible to people with disabilities. The design must be browser agnostic. The design must encourage visitors to browse course and program options while facilitating their taking action at member institution sites. Course information will be pulled from the VSC's ERP system.

3.0 Project Expectations

The following is a listing of the project expectations for the VSC Online Programs Website RFP.

3.1 Deliverables

The development process should include the following phases or equivalent steps:

- 3.1.1 Navigation Schematic – structure the site's organization and navigation system
- 3.1.2 Information Architecture – organize the content and flow of the website
- 3.1.3 Content Outline – provide a guide or checklist for each page suggesting format and length of content, as well as advice, direction and best practices for writing for the web (links, keywords, SEO, etc.)
- 3.1.4 Wireframes – display the skeletal and functional elements of each unique page template
- 3.1.5 Design Options – provide at least two different design approaches (demonstrating how each will vary by device) that follow the visual brand guidelines currently in development. Two rounds of feedback and revision.
- 3.1.6 Development– all scripting and programming to publish the website
- 3.1.7 Testing – across major web browsers and mobile OS
- 3.1.8 Publishing –to new domain TBD

3.2 Timeline

The VSC expects to begin work on this project immediately following completion of signed contract. All work must be completed with final invoice by December 15, 2020.

3.3 Hosting and Technical Requirements

The website must be built using WordPress CMS and must be compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA and section 508 of the American Disabilities Act and offer responsive design across technologies (browsers and phone/tablet/desktop). The site should support user access rights with various permission levels. The site should have the ability to support the use of video, images, and audio files in various formats. Performance must maintain fast page-load times mindful of Internet connectivity in a rural state such as Vermont. The site must be compatible with existing college system, able to integrate content from, but not limited to, the ERP, portal, and institutional websites. Vendor should provide costs for hosting during development, and the annual cost of hosting after site launch. Vendor should provide estimated

costs for ongoing support and training, including technical support outside of regular business hours as needed.

4.0 Qualifications, References and Pricing

4.1 Qualifications and References

Provide a description of the qualifications and experience of your company. Include responses to the specific required items listed below:

Bidder Profile and Qualifications

- Name, mailing address, email address and telephone numbers of company.
- Number of years in business.
- Number of employees in Vermont and nationally.
- Number of colleges and universities in which the product is installed and maintained by the bidder.
- Location of your data center.

Bidder References

You must demonstrate experience and capability in installation and maintenance of the proposed solution by providing evidence of successfully completing projects of similar size and scope. Please provide at least three customer references, with the following information:

- Customer name and location
- Contact person(s): name, title and telephone number
- Your project manager for the engagement
- Product installation date
- Number of years you have maintained the system

By submitting your proposal, you understand and agree that the VSC may make any investigations it deems necessary to determine your ability to perform the work. You agree to furnish the VSC all such additional information and data for this purpose, as the VSC may request.

4.2 Pricing

Your proposal should include all of the charges, and it should clearly state the pricing structure along with the types of products and/or services accompanying each price. The VSC expects fully bundled pricing for each service offered and any tiered pricing or volume purchasing discounts/rebates that maybe available due to purchasing loads.

4.3 Taxes/Fees

- 4.3.1 Please note any and all proposed taxes, fees, or charges.
- 4.3.2 The VSC is exempt from sales and use taxes. Submitted proposals shall not include these taxes. The College's tax exempt number will be provided to the selected bidder. Please clearly note these exemptions in your proposal.

5.0 RFP Instructions, Requirements and Information

This section provides information on how to contact the VSC for questions, deadlines, the selection process, legal and insurance requirements, and other general business matters.

5.1 Questions about this RFP

Please submit your questions to the VSC on or before Tuesday, September 29, 2020, at 5:00 PM Eastern Time. All questions will be posted on the VSC website, www.vsc.edu, and made available to all bidders. The contact information for questions:

<i>Name</i>	Yasmine Ziesler
<i>Title</i>	Chief Academic Officer
<i>Email address</i>	yasmine.ziesler@vsc.edu

5.2 Deadline and Delivery

The deadline for submitting responses is 5:00 PM Eastern Time, Friday, October 2, 2020. Provide an electronic copy **only, via email**, to:

<i>Name</i>	Yasmine Ziesler
<i>Title</i>	Chief Academic Officer
<i>Email address</i>	yasmine.ziesler@vsc.edu

5.3 Selection Process

Method of Award

VSC will base the evaluation of each proposal to this RFP on its demonstrated competence, compliance, format, cost, and enterprise applicability. This includes, but is not limited to, product availability, quality, prices, service availability, timing, and delivery. The purpose of this RFP is to identify those vendors having the interest, capability, and financial strength to supply the VSC with a VSC Online Programs Website. If the VSC does not identify a suitable bidder within the RFP process, the VSC is not obligated to award the project to any bidder.

The VSC, in its best interests, reserves the option to accept or reject any or all proposals, to accept or reject any item or combination of items therein, to waive any irregularities or informalities in any proposal or items therein, and/or to negotiate with particular bidders following the evaluation of proposals without right of recourse by other bidders. A top proposal would be that assessed in the judgment of VSC as best complying with all considerations set forth in this RFP. When VSC has tentatively selected a successful proposal, VSC may engage in discussions with the bidder to formulate plans in greater detail, to clarify unclear items for either party, and to otherwise complete negotiations prior to formal selection.

Evaluation Criteria (no weighting is implied by order of listing):

1. The extent to which the bidder's solution matches the requirements of the VSC.
2. Engagement methodology.

3. Bidder’s qualifications and references.
4. Cost and length of contract.

5.4 Bid Process

Date	Milestone
09/23/2020	RFP issue date
09/29/2020	Questions Due
10/2/2020	Bidder written proposal due date
10/06/2020	Selection

5.5 Confidentiality

The Vermont State Colleges comply with the Vermont Public Records Act, 1 VSA § 315 *et seq.* which requires public agencies to allow any person to inspect or copy any public record upon request. Accordingly, bidders are hereby advised that any communications, data or other information received by the Vermont State Colleges during the RFP process could be subject to a public records request. However, certain public records are exempt from public inspection and copying, as set forth in 1 VSA § 317(c), including, for example, those portions of a record which meet the statutory definition of a trade secret. Accordingly, bidders should submit a second copy of their proposal, from which any portion of the proposal that the bidder reasonably believes to be exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Act has been redacted.

By submitting a proposal, you indicate that you understand the requirements of this subsection (5.5) and the potential applicability of Vermont’s Public Records Act to your proposal.

5.6 Indemnification

The bidder shall indemnify and hold VSC, its officers, agents and employees free and harmless from any and all claims, liabilities, losses, actions, proceedings, suits, damages and expenses, including out-of-pocket litigation costs and reasonable legal fees, arising from or relating to the bidder’s performance in response to this RFP and under any contract entered into with the successful bidder.

By submitting a proposal, and in exchange for VSC’s consideration of same, you agree on behalf of yourself, your shareholders and your officers to be bound by the indemnification provisions of this subsection (5.6).

5.7 Rights of the VSC

VSC reserves the right, at its discretion, to pursue actions that include but are not limited to the following:

- Request additional information
- Request clarification of any sections or questions in the bidder’s response to this RFP
- Reject, for any reason, any or all of the proposals submitted to VSC
- Issue subsequent RFP or RFP invitations to bid as a result of changes and/or refinements to the proposed project

This RFP does not obligate the VSC to accept any proposal, negotiate with any bidder, award a contract or proceed with the project as it is outlined in this RFP.

5.8 Assignment

The bidder may not assign or transfer its rights or obligations under this RFP without the prior written consent of VSC, which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld. Any assignment of the RFP agreement by the bidder without the prior written consent of VSC shall void the RFP response from the bidder.

5.9 Insurance

You shall provide with your proposal, proof of insurance as stated below. In the event you do not carry the maximums requested, you must provide written proof that you will be able to provide the maximums if awarded the contract. You shall secure, pay for and maintain in effect the following insurance during the contract period:

- Commercial General Liability Insurance: Including Bodily Injury and Property Damage Liability, Independent Contractor's Liability, Contractual Liability, Product Liability and Completed Operations Liability in an amount not less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit, per occurrence, and \$3,000,000 annual aggregate.
- Workers Compensation and Employers Liability Insurance: For any bidders with employees, standard workers' compensation as required by Vermont State statute and employer's liability insurance in an amount not less than \$100,000 per accident, \$500,000 annual aggregate.
- Automobile Liability: For bidders who will drive on VSC's premises, Automobile Liability in an amount not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage, including owned, hired, and non-owned vehicle coverage.
- Professional Liability: \$1,000,000 each claim, when applicable.
- Cyber Liability: \$1,000,000 each event for Breach Response

If selected as the successful bidder, you agree to name the VSC as additional insured on your liability policies and shall provide a 30-day notice of cancellation or non-renewal of coverage to the VSC. The VSC does not need to be named as an additional insured on the workers compensation policy.

If selected as the successful bidder, you agree to submit a copy of the Certificate of Insurance verifying the above coverage levels to the VSC twenty (20) days prior to selling or distributing products and services at VSC or otherwise performing under the contract. Any liability coverage on a "claims made" basis shall be designated as such on the certificate.

Failure of the bidder to take out and/or maintain any required insurance shall not relieve the bidder from any liability under the contract, nor shall the insurance requirements be construed to conflict with or otherwise limit the obligation of the bidder concerning indemnification. The bidder's policies shall be considered primary insurance and exclusive of any insurance carried by VSC.

5.10 Intent to Bid

The undersigned (“You”) agrees to all provisions required in the VSC Online Programs Website RFP dated September 23, 2020 and all applicable addenda, with the exception of those listed below. Any exemptions listed may affect the viability of your proposal.

In addition, the undersigned (“You”) agrees to provide all equipment, material and personnel associated with these services as described in the VSC Online Programs Website RFP dated September 23, 2020, and all applicable addenda.

Exceptions:

Section Reference Number	Reason for exception

Company Name

Signature of Authorized Representative

Print Name of Authorized Representative

Print Title of Authorized Representative