

Community College of Vermont

Request for Proposal: Web Design & Development

Introduction

Vermont State Colleges d/b/a Community College of Vermont (CCV) invites qualified professionals to submit a proposal to develop a contemporary and compelling new web presence for CCV that engages users and helps them effectively find information they need.

The ccv.edu website serves as a resource primarily for prospective students, parents, current students, donors and friends, and job seekers. The site also serves to promote CCV's mission, initiatives, services to educators, businesses, policy-makers, and is a conduit to CCV's catalog, news site (now.ccv.edu), application for admission, documents and forms, and portal (intranet). Most staff and faculty resources reside in CCV's portal which many staff and faculty users access via the public website.

Vendors are expected to demonstrate expertise in WordPress, experience in managing website projects, and current knowledge of web design, development, and deployment best practices.

We expect that this project will be conducted remotely due to health and safety restrictions.

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For additional information and clarification please contact Becca Burns, strategist and project manager representing the Community College of Vermont: hello@iambeccaburns.com

RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

Only complete proposals will be considered. We welcome proposals from agencies as well as freelancers and independent contractors. Complete proposals will demonstrate an understanding of our request and must include:

1. Explanation of capabilities and core strengths
2. Description of creative process and sample project plan
3. Acknowledgement of ability to adhere to the live-site deadline of July 30, 2021, and suggest major project milestones and respective dates necessary to accomplish this
4. Cost estimates, broken out by key phases and project milestones
5. At least three, but not more than five recent and relevant work samples
6. Identify the primary contact and all contributors to the project, including subcontractors, if any, along with respective areas of expertise and credentials. Agencies should also provide a delineation of the portion of the scope of work for which each of these professionals will be responsible.
7. Three client references

Any addendum to this RFP will be posted at the RFP website: www.usc.edu/RFP. Bidders are responsible for checking this website on a regular basis and including the terms and conditions of all addenda in their Proposals.

RFP PROCESS & DEADLINES

- Questions due to Becca Burns (hello@iambeccaburns.com) by Tuesday, December 22, 2021 (answers will be provided by Tuesday, December 29)
- Proposal due date: 12PM EST, Friday, January 8, 2021
- Finalist interviews completed: Wednesday, January 20, 2021
- Award of contract: Friday, January 22, 2021

PROJECT TIMELINE

CCV is undergoing a federal accreditation process throughout 2021, a complex and thorough evaluation of postsecondary education institutions that happens once every ten years. To align with this process, we have set a target launch deadline of July 30, 2021. CCV looks to our selected vendor to suggest a workable timeline.

A detailed work plan and schedule must be submitted along with your proposal, with special consideration of the following:

1. CCV will assume responsibility for curating all website content and populating the new website. We must be provided adequate time to deliver content according to the project schedule. We require six weeks.
2. Holidays and any known dates of unavailability.

ABOUT CCV

Vermont Is Our Campus. No matter where in Vermont students reside, a CCV Academic Center is nearby. CCV is Vermont's second largest college, serving more than 10,000 students each year at 12 locations. We offer 29 degree and certificate programs, workforce education and secondary education initiatives, continuing education opportunities, and academic and veterans support services.

CCV is a pioneer of distance learning, with extensive online options, which we've expanded since the outbreak of the COVID-19 health crisis.

GOALS & AUDIENCE

Our current website launched in 2013, and much has changed since then, from media preferences to user engagement and behaviors. CCV wants to create a more contemporary and competitive web presence that is not only useful for students, faculty and staff, but has a greater impact as a marketing tool. The new website will convey our brand and offering, as well as connect resources, information and systems in a central portal. Our secondary goals for the new site include:

- Improve transparency and understandability of programs
- Eliminate redundancy and simplify content
- Increase efficiency; help people find what they need quickly
- Align content with current needs, future outlook and user analytics
- Use more visual content, and better accommodate video
- Welcome all learners and exhibit diversity and inclusion
- Improve/optimize the load time for all pages

CCV has a broad audience – from grade 8 students to continuing education adults and skill-seeking professionals. Our users include:

- High school students seeking a jumpstart on their college degree
- Prospective students seeking information about certificates, credentials, degree programs, career advising, and/or training opportunities.
- Employers seeking resources for professional development and workforce education
- Current students
- Faculty and staff

CCV also takes into consideration veterans and military personnel, working adults, single parents, first-generation college students, and new Americans. Vendors can read more about our students, alumni, and faculty at now.ccv.edu.

DELIVERABLES

Our selected vendor will be responsible for developing and publishing a complete, mobile responsive website, which will include condensed, restructured and/or new content. The final page count is TBD, pending a site audit and development of new navigation and information architecture. The development process should include the following phases or equivalent steps:

1. **Website Audit** – examine both the front and backend of ccv.edu and subdomains, and evaluate the current code, functionality, architecture, and content against analytics and goals for the new site. A list of current pages and content is available at ccv.edu/sitemap.
2. **Navigation Schematic** – structure the site’s organization and navigation system.
3. **Information Architecture** – organize the content and flow of the website; identify and define the content and functionality needs of each page.
4. **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, etc.).
5. **Wireframes** – display the skeletal and functional elements of each unique page template.
6. **Look and Feel** – provide at least 3 different visual design approaches (demonstrating how each will vary by device) that follow the CCV brand guidelines, including two rounds of feedback and revision.
7. **Design** – provide comprehensive, mobile-responsive templates for homepage, second- and third-tier pages, ad campaign landing pages, forms and any other unique pages TBD. Provide CSS for the course catalog (catalog.ccv.edu), web schedule (andromeda.ccv.vsc.edu/Learn/Grid/SiteList.cfm), and Slate (admissions.ccv.edu/apply).
8. **Development** – all scripting and programming to publish the website. Clean up code where necessary. Code must validate. Test for section 508 compliance. Must include all code snippets and pixels for advertising and analytics: Google Analytics, Facebook, and Google Ads pixels implemented via Google Tag Manager, with flexibility to add other standard pixels as needed.
9. **Testing** – across major web browsers and mobile operating systems.
10. **Deployment** – publish to ccv.edu.
11. **SEO** – basic best practices should be followed. If additional services and ongoing work is required to maintain, please provide resources and a cost estimate for services above and beyond this scope of work.
12. **Basic training** – for any new functionality, apps or modules in addition to new WordPress features that are unfamiliar to CCV website managers. Provide documentation and guides they may need to inform other staff (train the trainer).

FUNCTIONALITY

The majority of the CCV website content is images, text and basic links, however, we require the following special functionality:

1. Password protected pages – including account creation, login/out, password reset, update account features).
2. Video integration and video page backgrounds
3. Rich content services – We use Slate for forms, applications, and the credit predictor. Content services include ISSUU (for embedding digital publications on our site such as the Student Planner and Annual Report), and a custom calendar. See the Addendum on page 7 for a list of plug-ins currently used on ccv.edu.
4. Announcement/Newsfeed – this is an important feature that helps us post info with a shorter lifespan to the homepage. Would like to continue this.
5. Search – Our current search tool works well.
6. Image carousels
7. Blog – We currently use a blog format for now.ccv.edu, our student and alumni magazine.
8. Social media tool integration (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn)
9. Uptime status monitor

CONTENT AND POPULATION

Please include an estimate for consultation and guidance on writing style and language use as part of the website audit. Content editing and creation will be managed internally, according to the content outline provided by our selected vendor. Copywriting, migration of existing content and population of the new website lies outside of the scope of this proposal and will be performed by CCV staff. For this we require a minimum of six weeks to be included in the project timeline.

EXISTING ASSETS

CCV has a well-established brand, and will provide creative direction for a consistent visual identity, including color palette, fonts and images. CCV is able to provide graphic assets from CCV marketing, if applicable. All proposals should describe an approach (and provide a budget, if necessary) for graphics, custom photography, stock images or other elements that you may wish to use in the final website design.

HOSTING AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The website must be hosted on CCV web servers and built using WordPress CMS.

Our current website is not broken – it may serve as the basis upon which you construct the new site, rather than rebuilding from scratch. We look to vendors to suggest the best approach with consideration for overall cost, efficiency and quality.

Technical support will be provided to install any necessary systems, set-up temporary staging and publish the completed website. CCV owns certain licenses for modules/add-ons for WordPress that may be used if necessary.

CCV website managers are familiar with the WordPress CMS. Our selected vendor is expected to provide basic training for 2 CCV staff to edit and maintain the website if new functionality, apps, add-ons or features are used in the new site.

For additional information and clarification please contact Becca Burns, strategist and project manager representing the Community College of Vermont: hello@iambeccaburns.com

BUDGET

CCV has budgeted *up to* \$125,000 for all associated costs, including necessary services, graphic assets and our contracted project manager with an estimated fee of 15% of the web development total. We are seeking competitive bids; CCV is committed to producing an effective and appealing website while keeping costs minimal. Therefore, the largest consideration when reviewing proposals will be vendors' cost to complete the project.

DECISION CRITERIA

All proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee on a uniform set of criteria. Finalists will be invited to a brief interview in which to present capabilities, discuss the project and proposed working relationship, and meet those involved. Proposals will be scored, with points weighted as follows:

- Cost: 35%
- Capabilities and qualifications: 25%
- Ability to comply with proposed timeline or provide a rational alternative: 20%
- Chemistry (ability to demonstrate a positive creative experience and working relationship): 10%
- Snapshot of ideas and creative thinking: 5%
- Preference given to local Vermont producers: 5%

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All proposals will become property of CCV and will not be returned. 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.

The Vermont State Colleges (VSC) and CCV assume no responsibility and no liability for costs incurred by any person submitting a proposal ("Bidder") in response to this RFP or in responding to any further requests for interviews, additional data, etc., prior to the issuance of a contract. VSC reserves the right to waive any informality, to accept or reject, in whole or in part any or all proposals, to issue one or more contracts, or take whatever other action may be deemed to be in the best interest of the Vermont State Colleges.

CCV reserves the right to re-advertise for additional proposals and to extend the deadline for submission of the proposals. CCV reserves the right to seek additional information from bidders after the receipt of bids and each bidder waives any objection thereto.

The Vermont State Colleges are exempt from sales taxes. Where appropriate, the successful Bidder will be expected to insure that any purchases of materials are free of sales taxes. If necessary, CCV will provide the appropriate sales tax exemption certificate to the successful bidder.

Addendum

SOCIAL MEDIA

CCV is active on the following media platforms:

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [YouTube](#)

PLUGINS

The below plugins are installed and activated on ccv.edu, as well as a custom theme:

- Advanced Custom Fields PRO -- used solely for Tawk.to integration for the [Career Services chat](#)
- Classic Editor -- for opting out of the newish block editor
- Debug Bar
- Fluid Video Embeds
- GDPR Cookie Consent Banner -- Cookie banner
- Gravity Forms and Gravity Forms Quiz Add-On
- iThemes Security
- MetaSlider -- Image slideshows
- Monkeyman Rewrite Analyzer -- Display and play with your rewrite rules
- Multiple Post Thumbnails -- Adds the ability to add multiple post thumbnails to a post type
- PublishPress Permissions Pro and PP Collaborative Editing Pack -- Roles for user and group access
- Shortcodes Ultimate -- This is how ccv.edu incorporates design elements, or rather this is what creates the underlying styles that we use to incorporate design elements (e.g. accordions)

SUBDOMAINS

catalog.ccv.edu – Our course information is presented using Acalog; this content is not included in this scope of work, although basic CSS styles are needed to update the look and feel to match the new design.

now.ccv.edu – Student magazine and news currently in a WordPress blog format/function. This content will need to be updated with CSS styles to fit the new design, and the content migrated.