

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
VERMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

ISSUED BY: Vermont State Colleges dba Vermont Technical College
Office of the President, Patricia Moulton

APPLICATION DEADLINE October 8, 2021

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS: Email PDF versions of all documents to david.rubin@vsc.edu prior to the deadline, using the following naming labelling:

- Email Subject Line: RFP Farm Revisioning.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE RFP: Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to David Rubin at david.rubin@vsc.edu. For fastest response please enter “RFP Farm Revisioning” in the subject line of your message.

OVERVIEW OF VERMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE: Vermont Tech is part of the Vermont State Colleges with the main campus located in Randolph Center Vermont with a second campus in Williston and 10 additional nursing sites around Vermont. Vermont Tech offers academic programs including certificate, associate, bachelor and master level degrees serving approximately 1,500 full time equivalents with another 3,000+ students engage in our Continuing Education and Workforce Development Division. We offer academic programs covering a wide array of program areas including agriculture and food systems which is the subject of this request.

For the last year, Vermont Tech has engaged a wide variety of agriculture and food systems subject matter experts who voluntarily took a very deep dive in the analysis of our current ag programs and seminars, examining other ag and food systems programs around the country and considered Vermont’s changing ag landscape including the vast work by the Vermont Farm to Plate network. That work resulted in a comprehensive set of recommendations for transforming the current program to a new “Center for Ag and Food Entrepreneurship” (CAFE) outlined in [this final report](#).

The report outlines several “interim steps” to pursue over the coming months regarding implementation. These steps are outlined on page 18 of the [final report](#). This RFP describes deliverables related to further examining proposed changes to the Vermont Tech farm and preparing to implement the new educational delivery model.

SERVICES REQUESTED: Vermont Tech seeks a qualified individual(s) to work closely with Vermont Tech staff to conduct the following:

Refurbish and Retrofit Existing Facility

- A. Work with Vermont Tech staff (farm, IT, facilities, faculty and administration) to assess necessary infrastructure, repairs and upgrades of existing buildings on the Vermont Tech farm to prepare for the new program delivery, including but not limited to:

- a. Production buildings to include livestock, maple, apple orchard, greenhouse, and maintenance areas;
 - b. Teaching/support spaces (classroom, offices, locker rooms, bathrooms);
 - c. IT resources needed in general and for any planned distance learning;
 - d. Grounds - parking areas, access road, and integrated facilities;
 - e. Grazing infrastructure;
 - f. Fencing and barn facilities;
 - g. Manure management;
 - h. Feed and equipment storage; and
 - i. Crop storage facilities.
- B. Develop a budget and timeline for repairs and upgrades.
- a. Identify potential contractors to conduct required work.
 - b. Develop a budget and timeline for said repairs and upgrades.
- C. *Working with Vermont Tech program and farm management staff, plan for phased changes of the Farm, including but not limited to:***
- a. Provide a plan for phased changes from current dairy operations to the new production model. Elements will include:
 - i. Sale of the existing dairy herd;
 - i. Timeline for the sale;
 - ii. Research the best way to administer the sale, i.e. the Holstein Assoc, Cattle dealer, an alumnus, area farmer, VT Tech staff?
 - iii. Decide which animals to retain and why.
 - 1. Define needed upgrades for retained animals.
 - b. New production enterprises
 - iv. Explore harmonization with course work.
 - v. Sourcing of animals and equipment for the planned enterprises of dairy heifers, deep bedded hogs, beef cows, field/greenhouse vegetable production.
 - vi. Work with Farm staff to determine needed upgrades to the orchard and maple operations to develop more robust teaching/learning opportunities, then incorporate into curricula. This includes but is not limited to:
 - 1. Needed equipment and facility upgrades.
 - a. Timeline;
 - b. Identify sources and contractors; and
 - c. Confirm pricing.
 - vii. Ensure animals and equipment will be available when needed for transition.
 - b. Retrofitting of production buildings
 - i. Obtain estimates for the work and equipment;
 - ii. Identify contractors.
 - c. Assessment of crop rotations, leasing options, location for potato production.
 - i. Provide costs and benefits to leasing vs. on site at the Randolph Center farm.
 - 1. Identify possible lease site;
 - 2. Identify sites on the Randolph farm.
 - ii. Develop a timeline for implementation.

QUALIFICATIONS: The consultant must have a minimum of five years prior experience operating a successful agriculture (growing, harvesting and marketing) enterprise and/or 5 years teaching and/or business coaching/consultant in the same field.

TIMELINE: The entire project should be completed in no more than 6 months from an executed contract. Priorities include:

1. Refurbish and retrofit existing facilities.
2. Plan for phased dairy changes.
3. Plan for phased enterprises.

EVALUATION: Responses will be evaluated on experience, references, capacity, services to be provided, and costs.

GENERAL CONDITIONS:

1. This RFP does not commit the Vermont State Colleges System nor Vermont Technical College to award a contract.
2. This RFP and the process it describes are proprietary to the VSCS and are for the sole and exclusive benefit of the corporation. No other party, including any Applicant, is granted any rights hereunder. Any response, including written documents and verbal communication, by any Applicant to this RFP, shall become the property of the VSCS and may be subject to public disclosure as described in the Confidentiality section, below
3. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the Consultant of the conditions contained in this RFP, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between Vermont State Colleges System and the chosen Consultant selected
4. Responses shall be binding upon the chosen Consultant and irrevocable for up to 60 days following the close of applications
5. The Vermont State Colleges System reserves the right to:
 - a. Request clarification and additional information from any Consultant during the evaluation process
 - b. Negotiate with the chosen Consultant to include further services not identified in this RFP
 - c. Re-advertise with either an identical or a revised scope of work or cancel requirements in their entirety
 - d. Issue subsequent RFPs based on refinement of concepts proposed in response to this request
 - e. Conduct investigations of the qualifications of the Applicant as deemed appropriate

f. Request the Applicant modify the submitted proposal to more fully meet the needs of the Vermont State Colleges System

CONFIDENTIALITY: The Vermont State Colleges System complies 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, applicants for this RFP are hereby advised that any communications, data or other information received by the Vermont State Colleges System 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, consultant should submit a second copy of their proposal, from which any portion of the proposal that the consultant 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 section and the potential applicability of Vermont's Public Records Act to your proposal.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS: All submissions are due no later than **5:00 pm EST on September 24, 2021**. In one pdf document, please provide the following:

1. Organization and/or Personnel Qualifications: Provide a statement of qualifications and capability to perform the services sought by this RFP, including:

a. Detailed plan and timeline for approaching the investigation process to be used with timelines and deliverables at each step or stage.

b. Description of relevant experience with work similar in nature, size, and scope to that which is the subject of this RFP.

c. Qualifications, experience and education for personnel working on this engagement including education level, skillset (described in detail), experience level, and job title along with a resume. Relevance with similar projects should be cited along with the level of effort expected for this engagement.

d. The number of days following the VSCS's authorization to proceed by which the Consultant will be ready to begin work, including mobilization of resources.

2. References: Provide references from three to five clients or employers performing work of similar complexity. In each reference include the following:

a. Project name and description including primary project scope, description of complexity, communication, and project plan

b. Duration and size of project. In this section include the beginning and end dates of the project, search profile, volume and quality of candidates screened, schedule, and approach employed

c. Outcome of work, if successfully concluded, and how long that project or facility has operated.

d. Name of company or individual(s).

e. Project sponsor name, telephone number, and email address.

3. Fee Proposal: Provide a fee proposal for the work.

4. Redacted Copy: Provide a second copy of the proposal, redacting any portion of the proposal that is reasonably believed to be exempt from disclosure under the Vermont Public Records Act.