

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**PROPOSAL NAME**  
**Vermont State Colleges System**  
**Vermont State University**

**ISSUED BY**

Vermont State Colleges: Vermont State University

**APPLICATION DEADLINE**

Tuesday, November 29, 2022 5 pm EST

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

Email PDF versions of all documents to [Sylvia.Plumb@VermontState.edu](mailto:Sylvia.Plumb@VermontState.edu) by the deadline, using the following naming convention:

- **Email Subject Line:** RFP MEDIA PLANNING AND BUYING
- **Organization and Personnel Qualifications:** Applicant\_Name\_RFP\_MEDIA PLANNING AND BUYING\_Qualifications.pdf
- **References:** Applicant\_Name\_RFP\_MEDIA PLANNING AND BUYING\_References.pdf
- **Fee Proposal:** Applicant\_Name\_RFP\_MEDIA PLANNING AND BUYING\_Fees.pdf

**QUESTIONS REGARDING THE RFP**

Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to Sylvia Plumb, Assistant Vice President of University Marketing and Communications, at [Sylvia.Plumb@VermontState.edu](mailto:Sylvia.Plumb@VermontState.edu). For fastest response, please enter **Media Planning and Buying Services RFP Question** in the subject line of your message.

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## VERMONT STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The [Vermont State Colleges System](#) (VSCS) is currently comprised of four member institutions – [Castleton University](#) (CU), [Community College of Vermont](#) (CCV), [Northern Vermont University](#) (NVU)<sup>1</sup>, and [Vermont Technical College](#) (VTC). Across all four institutions, the system educates over ten thousand Vermonters and non-Vermonters each year, employs over three thousand Vermonters, and in Spring 2020, graduated over eighteen hundred Vermonters and out-of-state students into the workforce with certificates and degrees.<sup>2</sup>

The VSCS is currently undergoing a significant transformation, with the guidance of the Governor, Legislature, the Board of Trustees, and the State’s *Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont*. The VSCS began working on internal transformation in summer 2020 with the [VSCS Forward Task Force](#) and several institutional tasks forces including [NVU Strong](#) and [VTC’s Transformation Advisory Team](#). On July 1, 2023, the Vermont State University will launch, merging three of the four institutions (CU, NVU, and VTC).

## SERVICES REQUESTED

The Vermont State Colleges System seeks a firm or individuals on behalf of Vermont State University and invites proposals from partners responsible for media planning and buying for brand awareness and to support aggressive enrollment goals from December 15, 2022-June 30, 2024.

### Project Summary

#### Audiences

- General Public
- Vermonters, first, then regional, then national, then international
- Prospective Students and Families
  - Traditional
  - Nontraditional students and adult learners seeking alternative study pathways and/or workforce training
- High School Guidance Counselors
- Alumni, Donors, and Friends of the College
- Conferences and Events—our facilities are a great place to hold an event or conference
- Other special projects

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<sup>1</sup> Northern Vermont University was created on July 1, 2018 from the merger of Lyndon State College and Johnson State College.

<sup>2</sup> [VSCS Sourcebooks](#) as well as [Board & Committee Meeting Materials and Minutes](#) are available on the System’s website.

**University goals include, in order of priority:**

- Brand awareness: Vermont State is here and should be on the top of your consideration set.
- Vermont State is a critical piece of the fabric of Vermont and the campuses are critical to the regions we exist in
- Increase applications to meet enrollment objectives.

**University objectives include:**

- Public and brand awareness for this new university with a 235+ year history
- Public engagement to bolster enrollment 1:1 marketing
- Support enrollment goals:
  - Increase enrollment by 1000 more than current enrollments at our three institutions (Castleton, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Tech), totaling 7000 students for fall of 2023 at Vermont State University.
    - Inquiry generation
    - Submitted applications
    - Reduce melt
- Retain existing students

Vermont State University invites proposals from partners responsible for media planning and buying.

The successful proposal will demonstrate

- Expertise in media planning, buying, and measurement
- Suggest budget range required to achieve goals
- Explain fee structure clearly

**Scope of work**

- Develop a paid media plan, in conjunction with the Assistant Vice President of University Marketing and Communications who will seek input from the Enrollment Marketing team to complement and enhance digital targeted 1:1 marketing.
- Oversee successful implementation of plan
- Development, project management, collaboration, and trafficking of creative assets to deliver on plan
- Monitor performance and optimize the plan

**Channels to consider including, but not limited to**

- Print
- TV/Cable: Video
- Radio
- Outdoor advertising: Busses and billboards, etc.
- Community: Vermont Public, other Vermont mainstream and regional media, etc.
- OTT (Over the Top) and Streaming: YouTube, etc.

- Online display advertising: digital geofencing (to deliver targeted creative ads to the right audience at the right time,) etc.

## **What's excluded**

- Digital strategy
- Organic search optimizations
- Keyword research
- Google analytics set up and reporting
- Goal tracking
- Paid search strategy development and management

## **Project Timeline**

- From December 15, 2022 – June 30, 2024

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

Bidders must have at least five years of experience successfully planning, managing, and buying media for higher education institutions. Firms must have a minimum of five (5) years demonstrated experience and expertise in the successful media planning and buying in public or private higher education institutions, public, or private businesses.

Bidders must be licensed in their state(s) of operation and comply with all federal, state and local laws, including the Equal Opportunity Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, civil rights legislation and OSHA regulations.

Bidders must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and/or pending lawsuits, as well as the name of any officer, director or agent who is also an employee of any institution in the Vermont State Colleges System.

## **EVALUATION**

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

It is anticipated that the initial term of any agreement resulting from this RFP will be for no more than eighteen months. There shall be no separate or additional charges, fees, handling, or other incidental costs following contract award.

At the end of the contract, Vermont State University will maintain the rights to all project assets, including artwork and verbiage.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria using a "cost per quality point" rubric. Each bidder's proposed cost will be divided by the number of points earned in our evaluation, and the bidder with the lowest cost per quality point may be awarded the contract.

- General quality, adequacy, and clarity of response.
- Demonstrated ability to successfully complete the requirements identified in the scope of work.
- Qualifications and experience of the bidding company and the staff who will work on this project.
- Quality and applicability of sample campaigns.
- Cost of services.
- Project completion schedule and strategy.
- Proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation committee consisting of Vermont State Colleges System staff and consultants. This committee will be the sole judge of the contract that best meets the colleges' needs, interests, and budget. The contract will be awarded to the chosen partner by **December 12, 2022**.
- The committee reserves the right to reject all proposals, to waive any informalities and technicalities, to solicit and re-advertise for new proposals, or to abandon the project in its entirety.

## **GENERAL CONDITIONS**

1. This RFP does not commit the Vermont State Colleges System 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. From the release date of this request for proposal until award of the contract, no contact with Vermont State Colleges System personnel or board members related to this solicitation is permitted. Direct all communications to the designated contact on the first page of this request.
6. 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, Applicant should submit a second copy of their proposal, from which any portion of the proposal that the Applicant 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. If you do not submit a redacted record, you understand that Vermont State Colleges System may provide a copy of your proposal in response to a public records request, without notice to you.

## **Direct Questions**

Please direct questions to:

Sylvia Plumb  
Assistant Vice President of University Marketing and Communications  
Vermont State University  
802.626.6459  
[Sylvia.Plumb@VermontState.edu](mailto:Sylvia.Plumb@VermontState.edu)  
[VermontState.edu](http://VermontState.edu)

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

All submissions are due no later than **Tuesday, November 29, 2022 5 pm EST.**

**PLEASE FORMAT PROPOSALS TO STANDARD 8.5" X 11" PAPER SIZE AND ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING FORMAT:**

### **SECTION 1: Company Information**

- Name, address, phone, email fax and website URL Federal ID number
- Contact person for the purpose of your proposal
- Date of incorporation/how long in business
- State where licensed
- Number of employees

### **SECTION 2: Company Narrative**

- Provide a 1- to 4-page narrative describing your experience, your philosophy/approach, and how that philosophy/approach relates to the project outlined in this RFP.

### **SECTION 3: Personnel**

- Provide a list of key personnel who will work on this project along with an overview of their professional background/experience and the role they would play in this project.

### **SECTION 4: Scope of Work, Timeline & Pricing**

- Describe the scope of work as you see it and how you will approach the project. Provide an estimated time schedule and costs associated with all phases and deliverable.
- Note any additional parameters affecting the cost of this project, including travel, optional services and contingencies.
- Provide a list of options and costs beyond the parameters of this project, if you see fit.

### **SECTION 5: References & Work Samples**

Provide three to five references (including at least two higher education clients).

### **SECTION 6: 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.

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