Questions for Website Support RFP

1. **For the finite projects (redirecting legacy websites, moving the CEWD site from Kinsta to WP Engine, blog migration. Etc.) are those items that should be scoped out individually as "one-off" projects outside of the ongoing support contract or are those examples of items that can be handled within the ongoing support contract?**

   We'd like for those finite projects to be completed within the first 2-3 months of the contract, with the migration and redirects to be completed within the first month. If it makes sense to scope the proposal into two requests (one for the finite projects and another for ongoing website support) that is an acceptable approach.

2. **Is there a target budget range for this project?**

   We do not have a specific budget number for this project. Our hope is that this project will evolve into a long-term partnership with the selected vendor.

3. **Is there a desired launch month/date for the new website?**

   The Vermont State University website is currently live and receiving monthly feature improvements to better serve the university's needs. We'd like to see content migration and redirects from the old websites take place during the first month of work with our selected vendor so that we can promptly shut down the old websites after.

4. **Would you be open to working with a Canadian vendor to get this project done?**

   We are open to working with Canadian firms if they are able submit to Vermont law and jurisdiction.

5. **Questions regarding migration and redirection of Castleton.edu, VTC.edu, and NorthernVermont.edu websites, please see this note:**

   We are removing this section from the RFP and it should no longer be included in any proposals for this project.

6. **Questions regarding finding a solution for the Castleton Center for Schools, please see this note:**

   We are removing this section from the RFP and it should no longer be included in any proposals for this project.

7. **Questions regarding migrating the CEWD website to our WP Engine account, please see this note:**

   We are removing this section from the RFP and it should no longer be included in any proposals for this project.

8. **What types of tasks do you find yourself needing assistance with on a monthly basis?**

   We are looking for assistance with installing updates and troubleshooting any issues that might arise from them. We are seeking a firm that can answer technical questions and provide code-level support to our internal web developer as they continue their work building out features on the website.

9. **Do you have any further context or insights that will help us estimate the right number of hours for on-going support?**

   Proposals can advise us on an appropriate number of hours based on the work requested each month. See the response to the previous question for more details on what we need help with on a monthly basis. Please also include the hourly rate in your proposal.

10. **Would it make sense to work in the API work into the on-going support engagement?**

    We'd like to prioritize this work at the beginning of the project so it is unlikely to be an on-going task throughout the entire engagement. Getting the catalog integration and calendar integration finished are very important goals for this project that we'd like accomplished within the first 2-3 months.

11. **Do you have a sense of how many news items will need to migrated from the legacy websites?**

    There isn't an exact count, but we want to retain the past 2-3 years worth of news stories from each of the legacy websites.

12. **Our assumption would be that we would just be able to do a simple export from the 3 sites into csv documents, reformat them for the new vermontstate.edu website and do a mass import. Is there anything special about this content that may cause any roadblocks with that process?**

    BigTree is the CMS used for the Castleton.edu website and presents the most unknowns in the process. We are not sure what data export capabilities exist within the CMS or what kind of direct database access to expect. We would like to explore options with the selected vendor to see what is possible.

13. **Before going through a Discovery phase, understanding accurately the full scope of some activities requested will be difficult (e.g. 301 redirects, etc.). Would providing a range of costs/range of hours for these sorts of Discovery-dependent activities be acceptable?**

Yes, if you feel that a range is more appropriate for situations that will require discovery you may provide that. Please be sure to give as much detail as possible on what each end of the range includes.

14. **Is one year your expectation for the length of the initial "ongoing support" timeframe?**

Yes, one year is what we have in mind for the length of this initial ongoing support period.

15. **Would proposing a range of retainer hours to be used as needed be acceptable for the ongoing support aspect of this project?**

Yes, a range of retainer hours is acceptable for this proposal. If possible, please provide an estimate of the hours we will need for our basic monthly needs as answered in questions 8 and 9. This will help us determine how many hours will remain unallocated for other support needs.

16. **Are there any third-party integrations needed beyond those specifically named in the RFP (catalog integration and calendar integration)?**

At this point there are no other third-party integrations planned for the website that would be part of this scope.

17. **Is there a "bid form" that we should use for our proposal, as referenced on the last page of the RFP (*"[if applicable: Please use the attached bid form when submitting a bid.]")*? There does not appear to be one attached.**

Apologies for the confusion here. There is no bid form being used for this RFP.

18. **(Re: Current Content / Migration Plans)**
   Can we get stats on the following:
   a. **# of content types on each site that will need to be migrated and the current site, categories (taxonomies)**
   b. **# of total users on each site and their roles.**
   c. **How do you plan to differentiate the content from each unit (Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, Vermont Technical Colleges, Vermont State University) in the website? Are they going to have their own subpages or we are going to group all the info into one site?**

a. We already have a plan for content migration (aside from news items) so page migration is no longer included in the scope.
b. User accounts have already been set up for the website so we are not needing assistance migrating any user accounts.
c. Most content is being rewritten and combined on a page-by-page basis for the new website. In instances where content is still specific to a campus, the site architecture will split to individual pages for each campus. Some specific content types such as news will just be combined into a singular news center.

19. (Re: Integration) What do you mean by "split off" on this paragraph? *"Move CEWD microsite from Kinsta to WP Engine hosting and ensure it is properly "split off" from the legacy Vermont Technical College website."*

We are removing this section from the RFP and it should no longer be included in any proposals for this project.

20. (Re: Integration) Can you give us an idea of what functionality are we going to develop with you Acalog Academic Catalog in the main site?

We are looking to display the required courses and program requirements from our academic catalog on each of our program pages. Each program page will map to a program in the catalog that can be accessed via the API.

21. (Re: Integration) Can you give us an idea of what functionality are we going to develop with you FormStack in the main site?

The ideal integration would Formstack would take form submissions and import them as events into the website. We are looking to have a review stage so that we can make decisions on which events should be published to the website.

22. (Re: Integration) Are we going to maintain a newsletter system? Do you want to create newsletters from within the website and send them to members or is this just pushing email addresses to a list?

We do not have current plans to maintain a newsletter system and it is not part of this scope of work.

23. (Re: Workflows) What is your ideal workflow for editing content? How many different roles would be taking part in this editorial workflow?

The standard user roles should be sufficient for our needs, though we are wanting the ability to set page-level access to website editors.

24. **(Re: Workflows) Are there any restrictions to users adding certain content? Is there any kind of admin approval needed to be published?**

Many users will need to be constrained to editing within their own sections of the website. For example, financial aid staff should only be able to edit pages with the financial aid section of the website.

25. **(Re: Users) Is user registration open to the public or are members added by admin staff or are there admin approval needed on user registration? Or some other workflow to add member users?**

There are no public membership features for this website.

26. **(Re: Users) Are we dealing with any members only access to content?**

The website is exclusively for public-facing content.

27. **Will each site be on separate subdomains or domains or just another path inside main domain.com/somepath?**

Some websites, such as CEWD, will exist as separate sites on a subdomain. Please note that we have updated the RFP to no longer include support migrating websites.

28. **Will this be themed differently than the main site? How many elements would be changing?**

At this point, we are not looking for the creation of any new websites beyond the currently site. Work will performed and supported through the current theme.

29. **Will there be any content that will be shared between sites?**

Content that is currently shared across the legacy websites will merged into a single, inclusive, copy on our website. This process is already underway and not needing to be included in the scope of this project.

30. **Will there be any users that will be shared between sites?**

This scope only includes user accounts for editors and website administrators for our primary VermontState.edu website.

31. **Are there different roles from site to site?**

This scope of work focuses primarily on the VermontState.edu website and the user

roles that can be assigned on that site.

32. Will there be a different menu from site to site?

We do not expect work will need to be done regarding the main site menu as part of this scope of work. That part of the website has been mostly completed and is being handled internally.

33. Will there be an overarching system that manages these separate sites?

We are not currently planning to implement a WordPress multi-site or any kind of centralized management across multiple websites.

34. (Re: Ecommerce) Are we going to need to sell anything on the site?

Creating a storefront feature for the website is not part of this scope.

35. The redirections to the new website from the old pages should be added on the proposal or this will be done by your staff?

We have crawled the legacy websites for Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College for current URLs and have mapped a redirect destination that we will be implementing. We do not anticipate needing assistance generating these redirects.

36. Upon review of the Vermont State Colleges RFP, we see that the website currently utilizes custom Gutenberg blocks. Are you open to new solutions that utilize Elementor within Wordpress?

As we have already dedicated significant resources into using Gutenberg for the Vermont State University website, we are not looking to switch to a different solution at this time. We are satisfied with our current solution and switching would require additional work that is not scoped in this RFP.

37. What is the Yearly Budget for the Project ? is there any ceiling cost ?

We do not have a specific budget number for this project. Our hope is that this project will evolve into a long-term partnership with the selected vendor.

38. Who has developed current website and when ? is the company still supporting your current websites ?

The current website was developed by our in-house developer. They are currently providing support for new features on the website.

39. Is there any incumbent on the project ?

For this project, the selected firm will be working directly with Vermont State University and our in-house developer.

40. Is there any interest of agency to continue with incumbent ?

The selected firm will continue working with our in-house developer as the website continues to be built out. We are looking for a partner that can assist with API integrations and offer code support as questions arise from our developer.

41. What about required platform? Do you have any recommendation about CMS like WordPress, Drupal, Joomla etc. ?

We are currently using WordPress with the Gutenberg editor.

42. Is there any sort of third-party integration required ?

We will need to integrate with our university's catalog system to display program requirements on program pages and with Formstack to feed into our events calendar on the website.

43. Is there any branding and style guides that offeror has to follow ?

Yes, a brand style guide for Vermont State University will be provided to the selected firm.

44. Is there any data migrations required from old sites ? or your administrator will handle that as per provided training?

We are seeking assistance migrating news content from each of the legacy websites. Two were built with WordPress and the other is using BigTree.

45. How many unique pages on your both current sites and how many unique pages are expected in new site ?

We are removing the section about redirects and page content migration from the RFP and it should no longer be included in any proposals for this project.

46. Can you quantify total number of pages in new site? And content that has to be migrated (if any)

We are removing the section about redirects and page content migration from the RFP

and it should no longer be included in any proposals for this project.

47. **We are not Vermont based org. are we still welcome to participate ?**

    Yes, it is not a requirement to be based in Vermont. Firms must be able submit to Vermont law and jurisdiction though.

48. **Is there any detailed that you can share highlighting required features and functionalities in new website ?**

    We expect to work with the selected firm to implement integrations for the academic catalog and event calendar. Program pages should display program requirements as listed in the academic catalog. For the event calendar, when users submit our Formstack form an event should be published to the website calendar. There will need to be an approval process as part of this integration.

49. **Do you have a not-to-exceed budget for the items in the scope (not including ongoing support in question 2)?**

    We do not have a specific budget number for this project. Our hope is that this project will evolve into a long-term partnership with the selected vendor.

50. **Be a resource for our in-house developer to inquire about technical issues and best practices as well as provide code-level support if needed. AND Provide ongoing, general support for issues with the website should our in-house developer be unable to solve the problem in a timely manner.**
    a. **How many hours of ongoing support do you anticipate needing (10 hours/month, 20 hours/month, Etc)?**

        We are looking for assistance with installing updates and troubleshooting any issues that might arise from them. We are seeking a firm that can answer technical questions and provide code-level support to our internal web developer as they continue their work building out features on the website.

        Proposals can advise us on an appropriate number of hours based on the work requested each month. Please also include the hourly rate in your proposal.

51. **Assist in redirecting legacy websites for Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical Colleges to the new website. This involves setting up 301 redirects from a spreadsheet we have created, as well as helping us to create general redirects for various paths such as "/news" and "/events" to point to their locations on the new website. For example, all event links on legacy websites should redirect to the main calendar page on the new website.**

a. **Are the general redirects defined in the spreadsheet also?**

We are removing this section from the RFP and it should no longer be included in any proposals for this project.

b. **Do you have a full listing of general redirects and their intended destinations to share?**

See response above.

52. **Move CEWD microsite from Kinsta to WP Engine hosting and ensure it is properly "split off" from the legacy Vermont Technical College website.**
    a. **Can you please clarify properly "split off"?**

    We are removing this section from the RFP and it should no longer be included in any proposals for this project.

    b. **Are your expectations that this be a subdomain? Or its own site? Do you have a URL?**

    See response above.

53. **Advise and implement a solution for Castleton Center for Schools content which lives within the current Castleton website that is scheduled to be shut down. The content needs to remain accessible, but that department has not established a plan for how their significant amount of content will be organized for the main Vermont State University website.**
    a. **Are you looking for this to be incorporated into the new site? Built out in the new site?**

    We are removing this section from the RFP and it should no longer be included in any proposals for this project.

    b. **Are you open to this existing outside of the new site and linked from the new site?**

    See response above.

54. **Assist with migrating news content from the legacy websites, two of which are built on WordPress while the other uses BigTree CMS.**
    a. **How many pages of news content exist between the sites?**

    We plan to retain news content from the past 2-3 years from each of the legacy websites. The exact number of news pages has not been finalized, as it may

fluctuate slightly during the transition. We will provide a more precise count and further details to the selected vendor during the project initiation phase.

b. Which site is on BigTree CMS?

The Castleton.edu website is currently operating on the BigTree CMS.

c. Is it possible to get access to the backend of the sites to see how the content exists for a more accurate quote?

We are not able to provide access to the backend of sites during the proposal stage. If you have specific questions about the backend of a particular site we are happy to do our best to answer them.

55. **Work with our in-house developer to build out additional functionality that is dependent on API integrations such as:**
    - Program requirements via Acalog Academic Catalog
    - Calendar population through Formstack
    a. Do you have API documentation for each?

    API documentation for Formstack is available online:
    https://developers.formstack.com/reference/api-overview

    API documentation for the academic catalog will be made available to the selected firm.

    b. Are there other implementations or just these two?

    These integrations are the only ones scoped in the RFP.

    c. Do you expect front-end development with these integrations?

    We are mostly seeking backend work on these integrations and then working with our in-house developer to get the information presented on the frontend.

    d. Please list any requirements beyond data fetching that are expected.

    For the events calendar, we will need to incorporate some solution to allow events to be approved before they appear on the website calendar. This might involve Formstack workflows or publishing as a draft to the WordPress website. Discussion with the selected firm will help shape the direction of the solution.