

# Request For Proposals

## Website Support

Vermont State Colleges d/b/a Vermont State University

### ISSUED BY

Vermont State Colleges d/b/a Vermont State University

### APPLICATION DEADLINE

January 26, 2024

### APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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

- Email Subject Line: Responding to Website Support RFP
- Organization and Personnel Qualifications: Applicant\_Name\_RFP\_Website\_Support\_Qualifications.pdf
- References: Applicant\_Name\_RFP\_Website\_Support\_References.pdf
- Fee Proposal: Applicant\_Name\_RFP\_Website\_Support\_Fees.pdf

### QUESTIONS REGARDING THE RFP

Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to Brandon Heanssler, Senior Web Developer and Designer, at [Communications@VermontState.edu](mailto:Communications@VermontState.edu). For fastest response please enter *Website Support RFP Question* in the subject line of your message. All questions must be submitted by January 24, 2024. Answers will be provided by January 25, 2024 and will be available on <https://www.vsc.edu/rfps/>.

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## VERMONT STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The [Vermont State Colleges System](#) (VSCS) is comprised of two member institutions – [Community College of Vermont](#) (CCV) and Vermont State University (VTSU). 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>1</sup>

### About Vermont State University

On July 1, 2023, Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College unified to form Vermont State University. This unification harnesses the strengths of each institution and focuses resources on serving the students of Vermont and beyond.

With transformation, the Vermont State Colleges System is committed to revolutionary change – modernizing its academic programs, streamlining administrative processes, strengthening student services, and expanding workforce development and continuing education programming.

### Vermont State University Mission

Vermont State University prepares all students for meaningful work and responsible citizenship by fostering their intellectual, personal, and creative growth in an accessible, caring, and inclusive community. As Vermont's regional public university, our technological, professional, and liberal arts programs engage with partners throughout Vermont and beyond to provide students with rich real-world learning while meeting the needs of our communities and the state.

## SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Vermont State Colleges System invites proposals to support our new website for Vermont State University. The website utilizes custom Gutenberg blocks to provide an easy-to-use interface to our web team for content entry.

Successful proposals will demonstrate knowledge of web best practices and experience creating custom Gutenberg blocks. We are looking for a strong partner that is willing to work with our in-house team to ensure the website continues to operate smoothly and efficiently.

Vermont State University is looking for a partner to:

- 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.
- Assist with migrating news content from the legacy websites, two of which are built on WordPress while the other uses BigTree CMS.
- 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
- Provide ongoing, general support for issues with the website should our in-house developer be unable to solve the problem in a timely manner.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

Bidders must have at least five years of experience designing and implementing WordPress websites and a proven track record in creating websites that employ responsive design. Bidders with experience building and supporting WordPress websites with custom Gutenberg blocks are preferred. Bidders with completed projects for higher education clients are also preferred.

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 College system.

Bidders must be prepared to describe their experience with and process for soliciting feedback from faculty, students, and administrators at various stages of development.

## EVALUATION

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 will 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 work samples.
- Reference responses.
- Cost of services.
- Project completion schedule and strategy.

## 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 bid indicates acceptance by the party 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 party selected.
4. Responses shall be binding upon the chosen party 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. Any contract awarded will be governed by the laws of the State of Vermont and adjudicated in the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of the State of Vermont.
7. The Vermont State Colleges System reserves the right to:
  - a. Request clarification and additional information from any party during the evaluation process.
  - b. Re-advertise with either an identical or a revised scope of work or cancel requirements in their entirety.
  - c. Issue subsequent RFPs based on refinement of concepts proposed in response to this request.
  - d. Conduct investigations of the qualifications of the Applicant as deemed appropriate.
  - e. 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, applicants 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.

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

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 (or SSN if sole proprietor).
- 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 developing and supporting WordPress websites and how that philosophy/approach relates to the project outlined in this RFP. Please detail any work for higher education institutions and/or experience with Gutenberg blocks.

#### 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. For the website, this would include the initial development help with API integrations as well as the ongoing support phase.
- Note any additional parameters affecting the cost of this project, including travel, optional services, and contingencies.
- Provide a list of options and costs for continued training and support beyond the parameters of this project.

#### SECTION 5: References & Work Samples

- Provide three references (higher education clients preferred) for completed projects.
- Provide work samples or case studies and links to URLs for projects involving a similar scope of work as outlined in this RFP.

All submissions are due no later than January 26, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.

[if applicable: Please use the attached bid form when submitting a bid.]