

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Marketing and Creative Services

ISSUED BY: Vermont State University Workforce, Community & Economic Development Division

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Monday, June 3, 2024, 5:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS: Email PDF versions of all documents to CWPE@VermontState.edu by the deadline using the following naming convention: Email Subject Line: Marketing and Creative Services Proposal

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE RFP: Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to Carrie Wright, Director of Operations for Workforce [\[Carrie.Wright@VermontState.edu\]](mailto:Carrie.Wright@VermontState.edu). Please put "Marketing and Creative Services Question" in the subject line of your message. All questions must be submitted by May 15, 2024, 5:00 P.M. EST. Answers will be provided by May 20, 2024, 5:00 P.M. EST, and available on www.vsc.edu/rfps.

VERMONT STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The Vermont State Colleges System (VSCS) underwent 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 the summer of 2020.

The VSCS has two member institutions: Community College of Vermont (CCV) and Vermont State University (VTSU). Each year, the VSCS educates 10,000 Vermonters and non-Vermonters and employs over 3,000 full—and part-time personnel. In the spring of 2023, the VSCS graduated over 2,205 Vermonters and out-of-state students into the workforce with certificates and degrees.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Workforce, Community, & Economic Development (WCED) at VTSU consists of four Centers: The Center for Agriculture & Food Entrepreneurship (CAFE), the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CIE), the Center for Schools (CFS), and the Center for Workforce & Professional Education (CWPE). These Centers offer certificates, innovation hubs, online and in-person continuing professional education, training required for licensure, registered apprenticeship programs, and customized training for employers. WCED requests interested parties submit competitive bids to provide marketing and creative services, which are listed below.

The selected consultant will provide all labor, equipment, supplies, supervision, tools, and materials to furnish marketing and promotional services for WCED.

All work will be performed professionally, with the highest quality standards, and according to the conditions outlined in the contract. All creative, marketing, and promotional work will utilize the approved VTSU Branding and Writing Style guides.

Submitting consultants should consider addressing how they can utilize the following to attract potential employer partners and participants while delivering key performance indicators to establish a return on investment to the WCED:

- Graphic Design Services;

- Content Generation/ Copywriting;
- Media Buying;
- Target Market Identification;
- Market Research and Analysis;
- Material Production for Tabling Events;
- Social Media Management;
- Digital Marketing, including Storytelling;
- Manage Marketing Budget and Activities to Establish Return-on-Investment;
- Public Relation Materials – i.e., Press Releases;
- Overall Brand Management.

EVALUATION

Responses will be evaluated on experience, capabilities, mission, core values alignment, and costs. Priority will be given to a proposal that shows:

1. Relevant Experience: the vendor's experience in providing marketing and creative services specifically for workforce development programs within higher education institutions.
2. Understanding of Audience: the vendor's understanding of the target audience, including students, employers, instructors, and other stakeholders in the workforce development ecosystem.
3. Creative Portfolio: the vendor's portfolio of past work, focusing on creativity, innovation, and effectiveness in communicating messages relevant to workforce development initiatives.
4. Strategic Approach: the vendor's strategic approach to marketing and creative services, including their ability to align campaigns with the workforce development office's goals and objectives.
5. Ability to Meet Deadlines: the vendor's record of meeting deadlines and delivering high-quality work within specified timelines.
6. Budget Compliance: the vendor's ability to work within the proposed budget while still delivering effective marketing and creative solutions.
7. Technology and Tools: the vendor's use of technology, tools, and platforms for marketing and creative services, ensuring compatibility with the institution's existing systems and infrastructure.
8. Team Expertise: the expertise and qualifications of the vendor's team members, including designers, copywriters, strategists, and project managers.
9. Communication and Collaboration: the vendor's communication and collaboration processes, including how they plan to engage with stakeholders and incorporate feedback throughout the project lifecycle.
10. Measurement and Reporting: the vendor's approach to measuring the success of marketing campaigns and reporting on key performance indicators (KPIs) relevant to workforce development goals.
11. Diversity and Inclusion: the vendor's commitment to diversity and inclusion in their creative work, ensuring that marketing materials represent the diverse perspectives and backgrounds of the target audience.
12. Sustainability Practices: the vendor's commitment to sustainability practices in their operations and production processes, aligning with the institution's values and sustainability initiatives.
13. References and Testimonials: references and testimonials from past clients within the higher education sector to gauge the vendor's reputation and client satisfaction.
14. Innovation and Adaptability: the vendor's ability to innovate and adapt to changing trends and technologies in the marketing and creative services industry, ensuring future-proof solutions.

15. Legal and Compliance Considerations: the vendor's compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements relevant to marketing and creative services, including copyright laws, data protection regulations, and accessibility standards.

SCORING

1. Relevant Experience
 - Weight: 10%
 - Maximum Points: 20
2. Understanding of Audience
 - Weight: 10%
 - Maximum Points: 20
3. Creative Portfolio
 - Weight: 15%
 - Maximum Points: 30
4. Strategic Approach
 - Weight: 10%
 - Maximum Points: 20
5. Ability to Meet Deadlines
 - Weight: 10%
 - Maximum Points: 20
6. Budget Compliance
 - Weight: 10%
 - Maximum Points: 20
7. Technology and Tools
 - Weight: 5%
 - Maximum Points: 10
8. Team Expertise
 - Weight: 5%
 - Maximum Points: 10
9. Communication and Collaboration
 - Weight: 5%
 - Maximum Points: 10
10. Measurement and Reporting
 - Weight: 10%
 - Maximum Points: 20
11. Diversity and Inclusion
 - Weight: 5%
 - Maximum Points: 10
12. Sustainability Practices
 - Weight: 5%
 - Maximum Points: 10

Total Weight: 100%

Total Maximum Points: 200

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 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 after the applications close
5. From the release date of this RFP until the award of the contract, no contact with Vermont State Colleges System, personnel, or board members related to this solicitation are 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 party during the evaluation process.
 - b. Re-advertise with an identical or revised scope of work or cancel requirements.
 - 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 meet the Division of Workforce, Community & Economic Development needs more fully.

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 outlined in 1 VSA § 317©, including, for example, those portions of a record that meet the statutory definition of a trade secret. Accordingly, the vendor should submit a second copy of their proposal, from which any portion of the proposal that the vendor believes to be exempt from disclosure under the Vermont 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 June 3, 2024, 5:00 P.M. EST

Write a brief proposal that addresses the services requested. Please clearly state:

1. Your experience and existing business;
2. Explain your interest in providing marketing and creative services to WCED;
3. Your time and management plan; and
4. Cost proposal.
 - a. Cost proposals should be presented with time and materials, identifying hourly rates for professional services and materials costs and indicating indirect or administrative fees.