



Maine Community College System

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS Website Redesign Services

Issue Date: July 31, 2024

Response to RFP Due: 4 p.m. EST, Friday, August 23, 2024

Inquiries and proposals to: Suzanne Mayo

Email proposals to: smayo@mccs.me.edu

SUMMARY

The Maine Community College System (MCCS) is requesting proposals from qualified vendors to provide upgrades, design, development, and website hosting services for seven websites (for the MCCS System Office and for six of its seven colleges.)

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF MCCS

The Maine Community College System is Maine's public two-year community college system. The seven colleges serve more than 30,000 students a year through early college, short-term workforce training, associate degree, certificate, and advanced certificate programs.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

MCCS is looking to upgrade its current websites, which are about eight years old. The project should:

- Improve the usability, design, marketing functions, and appeal of the sites for an optimized user experience.
- Upgrade and align the appearance, information architecture, and page structure across the college websites, while maintaining the existing branding for each website. Most sites want to stay close to their current design.
- Upgrade sites from classic Wordpress to Wordpress Gutenberg.
- Result in sites that reflect the reorganization of academic programs from an alphabetical index to the MCCS Academic "Pathways" structure. (The eight Pathways are: Arts, Humanities, Digital Media, and Communication; Business and Hospitality; Computer Science and Information Technology; Education, Human Services, and Social and Behavioral Sciences; Health Sciences; Industrial Technology and Transportation; Public Safety; and Sciences, Engineering, and Mathematics.)
- Be integrated with the other technologies used on the sites, including third-party plug-ins.

Current sites, and approximate monthly page views:

- www.mccs.me.edu – Maine Community College System (29,000)
- www.cmcc.edu – Central Maine Community College (65,000)
- www.emcc.edu – Eastern Maine Community College (55,000)

- www.kvcc.me.edu - Kennebec Valley Community College (85,000)
- www.nmcc.edu - Northern Maine Community College (27,000)
- www.smccme.edu - Southern Maine Community College (151,000)
- www.wccc.me.edu - Washington County Community College

SCOPE OF WORK

The primary purpose of this project is to bring the web sites up to date, with modern design and functionality that improves service to visitors. The resulting web sites should be easy to navigate, manage, and update.

We anticipate the websites will be updated to WordPress Gutenberg. The academic pages should be updated to reflect the college's Pathways organization. MCCS will provide the selected vendor with a roadmap for the elements needed for the colleges' academic program pages. ("Pathways")

Across the six college sites, we anticipate that there will be common wireframe layouts and elements for certain pages that are common to each site.

The resulting websites must:

- Interface in a secure manner with third-party tools such as Blackboard, Anthology, or the college's course catalog database. (Examples: Student Information System (SIS)-Anthology Student; Learning Management System (LMS)-D2L Brightspace; Payment Gateway System-TouchNet; Human Resources Management System-PayCom; Financial Management System-Anthology Finance; Residence Life Management Systems; Meal Plan Services; and Card Services.)
- Be responsively designed to support cross-platform and cross-browser compatibility with a strong emphasis on mobile design and mobile access. (Testing options should be provided across multiple devices and browsers: iOS Smartphones; Android Smartphones; iOS Tablets; Android Tablets; Windows Desktop Computers; iOS Desktop Computers; Browsers: Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, etc.)
- Meet W3C standards for accessibility.
- Meet FERPA and PII data security standards.
- Be designed with search-engine optimization in mind.
- Allow a primary administrator to control the access of multiple users in a straightforward way that is easy to use. Because there are many editors and stakeholders involved in adding content to MCCS sites, administrators must have the ability to maintain site standards by controlling who can publish or draft content for approval by an administrator, where they can publish/draft content, and who can access different areas of content.
- Content management tools must allow administrator ability to upload and place images on each page, add captions to those images, add page assets, embed videos hosted by video server platforms, and create password-protected pages for content not intended to be publicly available.
- Enable a designer other than the site architect to create key design elements. Include (or provide) all art files for design elements.
- Integrate search technology and analytics, including Google Analytics, HotJar, and Google Tag Manager.

- Include form support: The ability to create forms to collect user input, data sent to email account or database; submission confirmation by email, user information automatically populated on form, anonymous submissions.

EXPECTATIONS:

The colleges will provide most, but not necessarily all, website copy necessary for the sites.

The colleges will provide photography to be used on each page.

The firm chosen will be responsible for facilitating work sessions with project teams at each of the participating colleges and the System Office.

The firm chosen will input content and style each page.

The firm chosen will, before launching, undertake comprehensive testing on multiple desktop browsers, tablets, and smartphones.

The firm chosen should have experience working with higher education clients, with a preference for firms with experience with two-year colleges and/or experience with multiple colleges within a system.

The firm chosen should have experience with clients in Maine, or with states with a similar demographic profile of prospective students and state economies.

RFP RESPONSE GUIDELINES

Responses should include the following:

- Answers to Requested Information.
- Timeline to launch: Include milestones, deliverables, and projected dates. Target project completion date is Summer 2025.

REQUESTED INFORMATION

Consultants interested in being considered for this project are asked to provide the following information by 4 p.m. EST on Friday, August 23, 2024.

Approach and Methodology

- What is the design process?
- What are the underlying technologies to be used for the website?
- What is your approach to mobile design?
- What would be provided in terms of training (both for current and future employees)?
- What content management system would be employed?
- How do you test for usability?
- Please provide examples of your work that demonstrate adherence to W3C accessibility standards.
- What do you offer for support and maintenance after the websites are launched? What do you recommend as a minimum contract? How do you calculate billing for post-launch support and maintenance?
- Please explain the server requirements for the suggested CMS.
- Describe options for Managed Hosting Services after go-live.

Capabilities

- What is your experience working with secure data?

- What is your experience with SQL Database queries? Demonstrate ability to construct the queries needed to pull from SQL databases.
- What is your programming experience with ASP.NET, Java, PHP?
- What can you offer in terms of advising services for content creation and management?
- What is your experience with front-end design? Please provide examples.
- What experience do you have acting as a general contractor?
- Please describe your experience acting as a facilitator for a design process where it was necessary to bring multiple stakeholders to consensus.
- What is the hosting environment you offer/recommend for this project?
- Please describe your familiarity with other hosting environments.

Relevant Experience

- What is your experience with higher education clients?
- What is your experience with clients in Maine, or states with similar demographic characteristics?
- What is your experience with FERPA and PII data security standards?

Vendor Overview

- The name and location of your company.
- Contact information for point individual.
- Location of office that will be serving MCCS.
- Brief general description of your company.
- Number of years of experience.
- Company objectives.
- The MCCS intends to engage a firm as an independent contractor. Describe:
 - The desired terms of payment for services and projects described in this RFP.
 - Your general hourly rate.
 - Any special terms that the firm may offer to MCCS.
 - The number of hours projected for the project. (Note: *No budget has been finalized for this project at this time. A budget will be included at the time the RFP is awarded.*)

Client Base

- Please provide a design portfolio that demonstrates experience creating design for the proposed architecture and CMS.
- Provide at least three references of client organizations for whom you have conducted work similar to that detailed in this RFP.
 - The references must be relevant to service performed in the last 36 months.
 - Provide the organization name and location, starting date of service, and contact name, title, and telephone number.

SELECTION PROCESS

OPEN QUESTION PERIOD

To ask a question about the RFP or to receive answers to questions asked by other vendors, please e-mail smayo@mccs.me.edu by 4 p.m. Friday, August 9, 2024. Responses will be distributed and/or posted by 4 p.m. Wednesday, August 14, 2024. E-mails should include the following in the subject line "Questions: MCCS Web Redesign RFP."

Firms submitting all of the Requested Information by 4 p.m. August 23, 2024 will be given full consideration. Up to three finalists may be invited to give MCCS a presentation. The MCCS hopes to select a vendor and begin work on the project by the end of September.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Bidders' proposals will be scored based on:

- Approach and Methodology (25%)
- Capabilities (25%)
- Relevant Experience (25%)
- Vendor Overview, Client Base (25%)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions concerning this RFP should be submitted to smayo@mccs.me.edu by 4 p.m. EST Friday, August 9, 2024.

Requested Information must be submitted by 4 p.m. EST on Friday, August 23, 2024, in order to be considered.

The Maine Community College System does not discriminate and is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. For more information, please contact the MCCS Chief Human Resource Officer at 323 State Street, Augusta, ME 04330, telephone 207.629.4000, fax 207.629.4048, www.mccs.me.edu, or aao@mccs.me.edu.

Bidders interested in being considered for this work must agree to the following terms and conditions:

The terms and conditions, including pricing, of the final agreement resulting from this RFP process shall be available to any MCCS entity for the procurement of goods and services from the selected vendor(s). The University of Maine System and Maine Maritime Academy, both public higher education institutions in the state, shall be permitted to piggyback off the MCCS's contract if they should so desire. The Contractor agrees to further provide the products and services, with all the same terms and conditions applicable, to these additional entities.

NOTICE TO VENDORS AND BIDDERS: STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL MCCS CONTRACTS

The following standard contracting terms and conditions are incorporated and shall become a part of any final contract that will be awarded by any college or other operating unit of the Maine Community College System (collectively "MCCS"). These terms and conditions derive from the public nature and limited resources of the MCCS. **MCCS DOES NOT AGREE TO:**

1. Provide any defense, hold harmless or indemnity;
2. Waive any statutory or constitutional immunity;
3. Apply the law of a state other than Maine;
4. Procure types or amounts of insurance beyond those MCCS already maintains or waive any rights of subrogation;

5. Add any entity as an additional insured to MCCA policies of insurance;
6. Pay attorneys' fees; costs, including collection costs; expenses or liquidated damages;
7. Promise confidentiality in a manner contrary to Maine's Freedom of Access Act;
8. Permit an entity to change unilaterally any term or condition once the contract is signed;
9. Automatic renewals for term(s) greater than month-to-month;
10. Limitations on MCCA's recovery of lawful damages incurred as a result of breach of the contract;
11. Limitation of the time period under which claims can be made or actions brought arising from the contract;
12. Vendor's terms prevailing over MCCA's standard terms and conditions, including addenda; and
13. Unilateral modifications to the contract by the vendor.

BY SUBMITTING A RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL, BID OR OTHER OFFER TO DO BUSINESS WITH MCCA, YOUR ENTITY UNDERSTANDS AND AGREES THAT:

1. The above standard terms and conditions are thereby incorporated into any agreement entered into between MCCA and your entity; that such terms and condition shall control in the event of any conflict with such agreement; and that your entity will not propose or demand any contrary terms;
2. The above standard terms and conditions will govern the interpretation of such agreement notwithstanding the expression of any other term and/or condition to the contrary;
3. Your entity will not propose to any college or other operating unit of the MCCA any contractual documents of any kind that are not in at least 11-point black font on a white background and completely contained in one Word or PDF document, and that any references to terms and conditions, privacy policies or any other conditions referenced outside of the contract will not apply; and
4. Your entity will identify at the time of submission which, if any, portion or your submitted materials are entitled to "trade secret" exemption from disclosure under Maine's Freedom of Access Act; that failure to so identify will authorize MCCA to conclude that no portions are so exempt; and that your entity will defend, indemnify and hold harmless MCCA in any and all legal actions that seek to compel MCCA to disclose under Maine's Freedom of Access Act some or all of your submitted materials and/or contract, if any, executed between MCCA and your entity.