

Request for Proposals For Marketing Services

Issue Date: February 17, 2023

Email submissions to: smayo@mccs.me.edu

SUMMARY

The Maine Community College System (MCCS) is requesting proposals for a marketing/advertising firm to enter into a multi-year partnership to continue and grow existing marketing, advertising and public awareness efforts.

The contract is for two years, beginning July 1, 2023, with three one-year extensions possible.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Maine Community College System has seven colleges and nine campuses in Maine and serves more than 25,000 students a year through degree programs, customized workforce training, and credit and non-credit offerings.

It is the state's public two-year college system offering nearly 300 career and transfer programs, a robust short-term workforce training program, advanced credentials, and stackable pathways to one-year certificates and two-year degrees. It has a large early college program that serves high school students, and 80 percent of degree-seeking students are enrolled in career and occupational programs.

This contract is primarily for statewide and systemwide marketing for the MCCS System Office, however:

- 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.

Additional information about the institutions within the MCCS can be found at:

Maine Community College System (Augusta): mccs.me.edu

Maine Community College System (Augusta): mccs.me.edu/getstarted

Central Maine Community College (Auburn): cmcc.edu

Eastern Maine Community College (Bangor): emcc.edu

Kennebec Valley Community College (Fairfield and Hinckley): kvcc.me.edu

Northern Maine Community College (Presque Isle): nmcc.edu
Southern Maine Community College (South Portland and Brunswick): smccme.edu
Washington County Community College (Calais): wccc.me.edu
York County Community College (Wells): yccc.edu

SCOPE OF WORK

- Provide ongoing traditional and digital marketing services that expands public awareness of programs and services of Maine's community colleges.
- Build the reputation of Maine's community colleges as **the** go-to higher ed institutions that are affordable, flexible, relevant, and dedicated to the success of their students.
- Marketing efforts will include but not be limited to campaigns related to enrollment, recruiting, retention and alumni. Target audiences range from high school students (early college) to older, working Mainers (mid-career switchers, upskilling.) The average age of MCCS degree-seeking students is 25 years old, and more than a third are 25 years old or older. Experience reaching rural, lower-income, and first-generation students is a plus.
- Provide a comprehensive range of services that includes: Providing expertise and recommendations regarding the most effective marketing methods to reach the diverse audiences that are the primary targets of the system's marketing efforts; developing key messages; creative development; content production and editing services; digital media management; media placement; and analysis.
- Demonstrate a deep understanding of the Maine Community College System, its mission, and its strategic plan.
- Advise MCCS System Office management regarding opportunities that exist for systemwide marketing, advertising, and public awareness efforts that will complement and build on the individual college's marketing strategies.
- Must be able to provide content in formats that can be used on various platforms including: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo, LinkedIn, TikTok (ads), Twitter.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

Firms interested in being considered for this project should provide the following information:

- Approach and Methodology: Describe the approach you would take to complete the scope of work.
- Relevant experience: Provide a brief summary of similar projects conducted by the consultant.
- Vendor Overview, including: Name and location of your company. Project Manager contact information. Location of office that will be serving MCCS. Brief general description of your company. Number of years of experience. Company objectives.
- Recent references: Provide at least three references of client organizations where similar work as contained in this RFP was provided within the last 36 months, including: The organization name and location. Starting date of service. Contact name, title and telephone number.

- Confirmation that vendor has the resources to complete projects in a timely manner.

DELIVERABLE EXPECTED:

A written report summarizing the above and offering recommendations for building out existing MCCS marketing, advertising, and public awareness efforts, including cost estimates for each recommendation.

QUALIFICATIONS

The selected individual or firm shall have the following qualifications:

1. Experience conducting similar types of marketing and advertising projects.
2. Experience working in and knowledge of Maine.
3. Strong interpersonal and communication skills;
4. Individuals or firms that wish to be considered for this project should submit a letter indicating interest and the ability to start work on **July 1, 2023**.

Consultants have an obligation to disclose any situation of actual or potential conflict that impacts their capacity to serve the best interest of the Maine Community College System, or that may reasonably be perceived as having this effect. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification or the termination of the Contract.

The selection criteria will be based upon information provided regarding the organization of the firm, the qualifications and experience of the firm, and the fees.

TIMEFRAME

1. RFP issue date: Wednesday, February 17, 2023
2. Candidates confirm receipt of RFP and submit any written questions: No later than March 3, at 3 p.m. EST. (*Submit questions to Suzanne Mayo, at smayo@mccs.me.edu*)
3. All submitted questions will be compiled into one document and responses shared with all candidates: No later than March 10.
4. Candidates' written report due: March 17, at 3 p.m.
5. If needed, top candidates will be invited to make presentations.
1. **Contract start date: July 1, 2023**

MCCS reserves the right to revise the timeline at its sole discretion.

Proposals received after the due date and time will not be considered. Additional time will not be granted to any single bidder; however, additional time may be granted to all vendors when the System determines that circumstances require it.

MCCS reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion to accept or reject, in whole or in part, any or all proposals with or without cause. MCCS further reserves the right to waive any irregularity or informality in this RFP process or any proposal, and the right to

award the Contract to other than the lowest bidder. MCCS reserves the right to request additional information from any or all Bidders. MCCS reserves the right to negotiate with one or more Bidders concerning their proposals.

All responses should be addressed to: Suzanne Mayo, smayo@mccs.me.edu

**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 MCCS 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 MCCS' 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 MCCS' 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 MCCS, YOUR ENTITY UNDERSTANDS AND AGREES THAT:

1. The above standard terms and conditions are thereby incorporated into any agreement entered into between MCCS 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 MCCS 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.