



Responses to questions regarding the [2023 Maine Community College System RFP for marketing services](#). Like questions have been combined.

CURRENT VENDOR:

Who is the existing vendor? Is the vendor participating in this RFP?

- Ethos Marketing & Design, of Westbrook, ME, is participating in the 2023 RFP.

BUDGET:

What is the budget for this contract?

- It is not fixed and traditionally ranges between \$250,000 and \$450,000 a year.

What is your current media spend?

- Approximately \$150K a year

CURRENT MARKETING:

What marketing strategies and channels are currently employed? Is any analysis, tactics, data on current campaign available?

- Current marketing strategies include traditional and digital media. Current channels include websites, landing pages, print, broadcast, online platforms.
- Information and analysis of current campaigns is not available.
- Most recent MCCC reports, including student reports, is available on our site under the "About MCCC" tab, including current marketing assets such as viewbooks, fact sheets, programs of study. The annual report to the legislature is under "MCCC Reports."
- MCCC tracks marketing results with data-driven reports and media tracking.

Are current marketing efforts limited to Maine?

- Currently marketing is limited to Maine and nearby markets in New Hampshire. We would consider a broader scope.

SCOPE AND LOGISTICS OF MARKETING EFFORTS:

How many separate marketing campaigns do you anticipate will be needed?

- We have ongoing public awareness campaigns year-round; enrollment campaigns at least twice a calendar year; and responsive topical campaigns such as early college, free college scholarship, transfer opportunities, and short-term workforce training.

Is this contract for promoting the system brand, or is it for the colleges? Is it paid by the system or the colleges?

- This contract is just for the system office (MCCS Office of Public Affairs) and statewide marketing. It is paid by the system.
- MCCS colleges develop and manage their own marketing campaigns with their own marketing vendors, as described in the General Overview section of the RFP.
- There is a piggyback clause in this contract that would allow the colleges, UMS or MMA, if they choose, to work directly with the selected vendor under the terms and conditions reached in this contract.

Does the system coordinate marketing, advertising, and communication efforts?

- The system office (MCCS Office of Public Affairs) handles all statewide marketing, advertising and communications and is the sole point of contact for this contract.
- The colleges handle their own regional marketing, recruitment, advertising, and communications, reporting to their college president, not MCCS.
- When assets are needed from a college (access to students, on site photography/videos, access to instructors, historical assets, etc.) for a system marketing campaign, the MCCS Office of Public Affairs will be the sole liaison to the colleges, not the vendor.
- System and college officials share information and collaborate on a regular basis.

Does MCCS have in-house creative resources that could be dedicated in part or in full to this RFP work?

- There are existing in-house resources, however, vendors should include budgets for any new creative, including content production, copywriting, photographers, video production, etc.

Are there established MCCS brand guidelines and a photography/video asset library?

- Yes.

Are there any platforms you want to be included in the proposal other than Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo, LinkedIn, TikTok, and Twitter.

- Recommendations are welcome.

Is it an objective of MCCS to unify or align college branding as part of an overarching brand/strategy?

- No.

Is this a full brand refresh?

- No.

CURRENT CONDITIONS: (details here: <https://www.mccs.me.edu/news/>)

What is the current enrollment situation at MCCS?

- Up.

Are there any key milestones that we should be cognizant of when developing recommendations?

- See MCCS Annual Reports on website for details. Free College scholarship. Short-term workforce training. Doubling nursing programs. Early College. Major economic investments in MCCS from both private and public sources. Streamlined, supported academic pathway initiative in progress. 20th anniversary of community college system. Increasing, critical, need for skilled workers trained at Maine's community colleges to meet Maine workforce needs at the local and state level.

Who would you deem as your primary competitors? What are the barriers to a community college education?

- As a system, not a college, we are not in direct competition for students with any particular entity. The approach is more about raising awareness of systemwide MCCS opportunities to key audiences and finding and developing new audiences through an ongoing and every-changing mix of programs, modalities, geographic access and other factors, and then marketing and communicating about those opportunities.
- Generally speaking, barriers to attending community college include: cost, time, geography (access) and work-life-school balance. We serve mostly low-income, first-generation students. See MCCS Fact Sheet for details on student demographics.

VENDOR REQUIREMENTS

Must vendor have an office in Maine? Is there a preference for Maine-based firms? Do companies need experience working in Maine? Have you worked with an out-of-state agency before?

- The selected firm is not required to have an office in Maine and there is not a preference for Maine-based firms.
- We have not previously hired an out-of-state agency.
- As noted in RFP qualifications: *"The selected individual or firm shall have the following qualifications: ... 2. Experience working in and knowledge of Maine."*
- Ability to meet in person is not required.

Who makes the media buys?

- The vendor.

Does the agency manage social media accounts, or work with a social media manager at MCCS?

- The current practice is a mix, with planned campaigns managed through the vendor and other social media handled by MCCS Office of Public Affairs.

Will you consider creative agencies that have media partners or are you looking for a full-service agency?

- Subcontracting is allowed.

PREVIOUS MARKETING RFP MATERIAL

MCCS received a request for bid information from the last MCCS Marketing RFP in 2020. The information is available in Dropbox at the following links:

[ADV](#)

[Ammunition](#)

[BVK](#)

[Ethos part 1](#)

[Ethos part 2](#)

[FJG Adv](#)

[OHO Interactive](#)

[Propellant Media](#)

[Rebel Interactive](#)

[Strategic & Creative Marketing](#)

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