



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
for
Texting Platform with integrated Chatbot

MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (MCCS) is requesting written proposals for the purchase of a texting platform with an integrated chatbot, as specified below.

BID INFORMATION

- A. The RFP must be received by MCCS by Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at noon EST.
- B. Questions must be submitted via email to bconner@smccme.edu no later than Wednesday, April 28 2021, at noon EST.

- C. Proposals must be submitted:

Emailed to the attention of Barbara Conner at itbids@smccme.edu with the subject line of: “Texting Platform with integrated Chatbot”

OR

Submitted via the U.S. Postal Service Addressed to:

Barbara Conner, Southern Maine Community College, 2 Fort Road, South Portland, ME 04106. The envelope should be plainly marked: “Texting Platform with integrated Chatbot”

**Proposals shall remain firm for sixty (60) days from date of submittal,
and vendor must hold quoted prices for 2 months.**

- D. Questions should be directed to Barbara Conner by e-mail at bconner@smccme.edu. Please allow sufficient time for questions to be answered prior to the RFP due date. Responses to inquiries, if they change or clarify the RFP in a substantial manner, will be forwarded by addenda to all parties that have received a copy of the RFP. The College will not be bound by oral responses to inquiries or written responses other than addenda.
- E. By submitting a proposal, the bidder agrees and assures that the specifications are adequate, and the bidder accepts the terms and conditions herein. Any exceptions must be noted in the response.

- F. The bidder shall be responsible for all costs associated with this proposal up to and including any contract that may result from this proposal.
- G. The proposals will be evaluated, and selection made, on the basis of costs, compliance with the RFP and offering best value to the College, and other criteria as deemed appropriate by MCCS. **MCCS reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any formality in any proposal, and generally take such actions as shall be in their best interest(s).**

SCOPE INFORMATION

Maine Community College System is currently soliciting bids for texting platform with an integrated chatbot.

In your response please address how your solution meets the Minimum Specifications:

- **Ability to integrate with Jenzabar (API) and/or easily upload texting data sets manually through a .csv or other file type. Ability to download data from the platform into various data file types.**
- **Single sign-on**
- **Capacity for multiple administrators.**
- **Long form texting numbers**
- **Capacity for unlimited texting**
- **Capacity to handle large numbers of users (individuals and groups)**
- **When messaging large numbers of students at once, system will automatically space their delivery so they are not picked up as spam and subsequently not delivered**
- **Ability to understand and continue conversations that have typos and texting slang**
- **Ability to have BOT answer questions for some numbers and be turned off for others (i.e. Faculty do not need a BOT to answer questions, Admissions Office does)**
- **Ability for BOT to respond to basic questions/answers, escalate questions it can't answer, transfer individuals to a live person during a conversation if needed (with time restrictions as a live person may not be available at 2a.m.)**
- **For the BOTs auto responses - Bank of questions to choose from for initial setup. Capability for each individual campus to edit responses. Capacity to find an answers to questions not in question bank via the website. Capability for new questions and found responses to be approved for use by an administrator. The method the platform uses for finding answers needs to be identified.**
- **Ability for texting numbers to be shared as well as the same individuals have their own texting number (i.e. Advising Office would have one number to text from that 5 advisors might monitor, but those 5 advisors need their own texting line to text with their own advisees)**

- **Capability for personalizing texts being sent in campaigns with items from the data set (i.e., student first name, missing item needed to complete application, etc.)**
- **Robust reporting tools around platform usage.**
- **Ability to customize the look of the BOT for each individual college**
- **Ability to send Images (png, gif and jpg formats), hyperlinks, MS/Office documents, standard emojis**
- **Capability for ad hoc, scheduled, and event triggered messaging. Ability to schedule campaigns days/months in advance and a calendar feature to view upcoming campaign and event messaging.**
- **Ability for a student to opt out via the word STOP (and other industry standard wording) with automatic changes made to the phone number making it unusable for future messaging. In addition, the ability to manually move a student number into the opt-out status.**
- **Ability for an email notification to go to the individual assigned to the number when a text comes in (option to turn on/off this function) so the user knows a text has come into the platform without having be logged into the platform**
- **Administration rights to move textees from one texter to another without loss of past conversations (i.e. mentoring program – if a mentor leaves the program their mentees will need to be reassigned to a new mentor number and not lose the data from previous conversations with the original mentor.**
- **Ability for an administrator to access an account and send texts from that account for the individual the number is assigned to (i.e. the texter goes on vacation for 2 weeks, the admin can respond to texts from that same number so there is no confusion for the student)**

Additional requested functionality:

- **Short implementation timeline**
- **A master calendar that can have multiple offices (ability to show offices as desired) toggling them into or out of the calendar. This master calendar will provide a campus-wide view of all campaigns and events scheduled in order to have a 30K foot level view of communications as well as identifying under- and over-communicating time frames so modifications can be made as needed.**
- **Phone app for college personnel (not students) so they can receive texts on their phone and send text replies through the app so their personal phone data is safe guarded.**
- **Capacity for reporting and tracking student persistence of texted students (i.e. from inquiry to apply to accept to register to attend)**
- **Ability to text in different languages**
- **Ability to run simple surveys or quick survey questions, save data, report on data collected**

REQUIREMENTS

Bidders shall ensure that all information required herein is submitted with the proposal. All information provided should be verifiable by documentation requested by M CCS. Failure to provide all information, inaccuracy or misstatement may be sufficient cause for rejection of the proposal or rescission of an award. Responses to each requirement below should be in order and clearly marked on the response.

- A. Two (2) copies of the following must accompany your proposal:
 - 1. Proposal and Price Guarantee
 - a. Proposals shall remain firm for sixty (60) days from date of submittal.
 - 2. Delivery of services timeframe:
 - a. Provide a delivery timeframe with proposal after request of services.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. Bidder will provide a clearly list for **all** materials used.
- B. Description of all proposed services and time requirements shall be clearly described in the proposal.
- C. It is the vendor's responsibility to confirm they have sufficient information required for the proposal. Any additional information required is to be brought to M CCS's attention; please send to itbids@smccme.edu.
- D. This RFP shall be referenced in, and considered part of, any final contract.
- E. All applicable costs are to be built into the RFP. No material costs for items are included in the RFP.
- F. Supply materials are agreed to be accepted in advance by M CCS.
- G. M CCS is exempt from sales and excise taxes. Such taxes shall not be included in quoted prices. If any taxes are known by the Vendor to apply they shall be considered an expense of the Vendor and deemed a part of the quoted prices.
- H. The following M CCS Standard Term(s) and Condition(s) apply to all contracts with SMCC.

Be an approved service provider to the college.

**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 MCCS to conclude that no portions are so exempt; and that your entity will defend, indemnify and hold harmless MCCS in any and all legal actions that seek to compel MCCS to disclose under Maine's Freedom of Access Act some or all of your submitted materials and/or contract, if any, executed between MCCS and your entity.