



# Request for Proposals Web Design & Development



Vermont State Colleges System d/b/a Community College of Vermont

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**Application Deadline: August 20, 2024**

## **Introduction**

Vermont State Colleges d/b/a Community College of Vermont (CCV) invites qualified professionals to submit a proposal to create a user-friendly public web presence that also provides user-authenticated access to private content for CCV faculty and staff.

Vendors must demonstrate expertise with user authentication, experience managing website projects, and current knowledge of web development and security best practices.

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## **RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS**

Only complete proposals will be considered. We welcome proposals from agencies as well as freelancers. Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of our request and must include:

1. An explanation of capabilities, core strengths, and unique values.
2. A description of your work process and sample project plan.
3. An acknowledgment of the requirement to adhere to the live-site deadline of June 30, 2025, and an associated schedule of milestones and deadlines necessary to deliver on schedule.
4. A cost proposal itemized by milestones and optional features/functionality if applicable.
5. Three recent and relevant work samples.
6. An introduction to the primary contact and all project contributors (including subcontractors) along with expertise, credentials, and details of the project for which each contributor will be responsible.
7. Two client references with current contact information.

*Any addendum to this RFP will be posted at the RFP website: [www.vsc.edu/RFPS](http://www.vsc.edu/RFPS). Bidders are responsible for checking this website regularly and including the terms and conditions of all addenda in their proposals.*

## **RFP PROCESS & DEADLINES**

- Public RFP issued July 15, 2024
- Questions due to Becca Burns ([hello@iambeccaburns.com](mailto:hello@iambeccaburns.com)): by July 29 at noon EST, 2024
- Answers provided by: August 6, 2024 (Q&A also posted publicly at [www.vsc.edu/RFPS](http://www.vsc.edu/RFPS))
- Proposal due: Noon EST, August 20, 2024
- Finalist interviews: September 3-10, 2024
- Award of contract: September 12, 2024

## **PROJECT TIMELINE**

Our launch deadline is June 30, 2025. Bidders should suggest a workable timeline. A detailed work plan and schedule must be submitted along with your proposal, with special consideration for the following:

1. CCV will assume responsibility for curating all website content, organizing resources according to the content outline, and populating the new site. We must be provided adequate time to create and edit content within the project schedule. We require 6 weeks.
2. Holidays, paid leave, and any known dates of unavailability.

## **ABOUT CCV**

*Vermont Is Our Campus.* CCV is Vermont's second-largest college, serving more than 10,000 students each year at 12 locations – and is the most affordable college for Vermonters. We offer 38 degree and certificate programs, workforce education, and secondary education initiatives, continuing education opportunities, and academic and veterans support services. Each semester CCV employs over 400 instructors to teach courses throughout the state and online. We cultivate a supportive teaching community by providing faculty and staff with professional development resources and career advancement opportunities.

## **PROJECT SCOPE**

Our primary goal is to create a common space for all teaching and learning resources so our faculty and staff can quickly find what they need. Secondary goals are 1) to publicly demonstrate CCV's mission, values, and commitment to teaching excellence and continuous professional development and support for faculty and staff, and 2) to share information and resources with other professionals and prospective faculty.

CCV has 30+ faculty resources that must be brought into a common library. Our content is currently within LMS Canvas, an internal WordPress site, self-hosted videos on Yuja, and outbound links to integrated

in-house and system platforms. Many resources will be public, but certain items must be visible only to authenticated staff and faculty (~1000 users). We look to bidders to suggest the best method to establish a secure connection between public and private content, considering the following:

1. CCV has a single sign-on for most applications and websites. Authentication via this SSO is not required but is available. If used, it should support SAML and SAML2. Furthermore, support for uncommon is helpful, but not required.
2. CCV uses Microsoft solutions across campus and all departments. The current Microsoft tenant settings for Sharepoint require user authentication. An institutional change would be necessary to allow public access to documents within Microsoft directories. This is not an option.
3. A small team of CCV staff will manage all content and site admin. Other authenticated users should not have the ability/access to upload or publish content.
4. WordPress is CCV's preferred CMS outside of the Microsoft sphere.
5. We require a comprehensive search functionality that indexes all resources – public or private.
6. We expect most users to access this website and resources via desktop, but a mobile-friendly design is required.
7. We want the site to feature a public knowledge base that can grow over time.

Other colleges and universities have working examples of what we envision:

- [Vermont State University Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation](#)
- [Champlain College Center for Teach and Learning](#)

## **OTHER FUNCTIONALITY**

Mandatory functions:

1. Embedded video content via Yuja and Microsoft Streams.
2. Image galleries and carousels.
3. Integration and styles for Slate forms.

Non-essential functions (please itemize any additional costs/timeline implications in your proposal):

1. Consideration for a localized AI chatbot that could be activated in the future.
2. Notifier to alert authenticated users when new resources are available.
3. Upvote function for users to indicate which resources are most helpful. Comments and discussion boards are not necessary.
4. File expiration and archive settings for individual resources.

## **DELIVERABLES**

Our selected vendor will design, develop, and launch a website that includes condensed, restructured, and/or new content. The final page count is TBD, pending an information and resource inventory, and the development of the information architecture. We expect the project to include the following phases or equivalent steps:

1. Information & Resource Inventory – help CCV determine content for public vs private pages, and inform a process to gather pertinent details about all resources. CCV staff will be responsible for auditing and organizing individual resources.
2. Navigation & Information Architecture – organize the content and flow of the website; identify and define the content and functionality for each page.
3. Content Outline – provide a guide or checklist for each new page suggesting the format and length of content, as well as advice, direction, and best practices for writing for the web (links, keywords, etc.). CCV is responsible for content creation.
4. Wireframes – display the skeletal and functional elements of each unique page template.
5. Design – look and feel should follow the CCV brand guidelines and complement ccv.edu. Provide comprehensive, mobile-responsive templates for all unique pages and Slate form styles. Include two rounds of feedback and revision.
6. Development – all scripting and programming to develop and publish the website and database. Code must validate. Test for section 508 compliance. Code snippets for Google Analytics and Google Tag will be provided.
7. Testing – across major web browsers and mobile operating systems with a CCV staging environment.
8. Deployment – publish to a subdomain (TBD) of ccv.edu.
9. SEO – best practices should be followed.
10. Admin training – Our selected vendor is expected to provide basic training for two CCV staff to edit and maintain the website and any new apps or modules used.
11. Post-launch troubleshooting and consulting – to ensure the site is performing as required we expect our selected vendor to remain available for three months post-launch for edits, bug fixes, and quality control.

## **CONTENT DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATION**

Content creation, editing, and file organization organization will be carried out by CCV staff, with the guidance of our selected vendor. Copywriting, migration of existing resources, and population of the new website will be performed by CCV staff. For this, we require a minimum of six weeks, which should be included in the project timeline.

## **VISUAL IDENTITY & CREATIVE ASSETS**

CCV has a well-established brand. We will provide brand standards and creative direction for a consistent visual identity, including color palettes, fonts, and images.

## **HOSTING AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Technical support will be provided to install any necessary systems, set up a staging environment, and publish the completed website. CCV owns certain licenses for modules/add-ons for WordPress that may be used if necessary. CCV uses Slate Forms when form functionality is required. CCV hosts its WordPress websites on WP Engine.

## **BUDGET**

CCV has budgeted *up to* \$60,000 for this project, which must include the fees for our dedicated project manager (15% of the selected vendor's total cost, i.e. vendor fee \* 1.15 = \$60,000 or fewer). We are seeking competitive bids.

## **DECISION CRITERIA**

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee using a uniform set of criteria. Finalists will be invited to a brief interview in which they may present capabilities, discuss the project and proposed working relationship, and meet the team involved. Proposals will be scored, with points weighted as follows:

- Cost: 35%
- Capabilities and Qualifications: 25%
- Ability to comply with the required timeline or provide a rational alternative: 20%
- Chemistry (potential for a positive experience and working relationship): 10%
- Snapshot of ideas and creative thinking: 5%
- Preference given to local Vermont producers: 5%

## **TERMS AND 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 Vermont State College System (VSCS) and CCV and are for the sole and exclusive benefit of the corporation. All proposals will become the property of the Vermont State College System and CCV and will not be returned. The Vermont State Colleges comply 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, bidders are hereby advised that any communications, data, or other information received by the Vermont State Colleges 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(c), including, for example, those portions of a record that meet the statutory definition of a trade secret. Accordingly, bidders should submit a second copy of their proposal, from which any portion of the proposal that the bidder reasonably believes to be exempt from disclosure under the 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.
3. From the release date of this request for proposal until award of the contract, no contact with Vermont State Colleges System personnel or board members related to this solicitation is permitted. Direct all communications to the designated contact on the first page of this request.
4. Any contract awarded will be governed by the laws of the State of Vermont and adjudicated in the exclusive jurisdiction of the court of the State of Vermont.
5. The Vermont State Colleges (VSC) and CCV assume no responsibility and no liability for costs incurred by any person submitting a proposal ("Bidder") in response to this RFP or in responding to any further requests for interviews, additional data, etc., before the issuance of a contract. VSC reserves the right to waive any informality, to accept or reject, in whole or in part, any or all proposals, to issue one or more contracts, or to take whatever other action may be deemed to be in the best interest of the Vermont State Colleges.
6. Submission of a bid indicates acceptance by the party of the conditions contained 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.
7. CCV reserves the right to re-advertise for additional proposals and to extend the deadline for submission of the proposals. CCV reserves the right to seek additional information from bidders after the receipt of bids and each bidder waives any objection thereto.
8. The Vermont State Colleges are exempt from sales taxes. Where appropriate, the successful Bidder will be expected to ensure that any purchases of materials are free of sales taxes. If necessary, CCV will provide the appropriate sales tax exemption certificate to the successful bidder.

