REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

PROJECT NO. RFP 16-28

WEBSITE REDESIGN PROJECT

<u>QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS NO. 2</u>

Date: March 1, 2016

To: Prospective Respondents

From: Procurement Operations Department, Houston Community College

Subject: Questions and Responses

1. Does the firm need to register as a vendor on the HCC Procurement Operations Department Website in order to submit a proposal?

   Response: No, registration however, is a condition of award.

2. Are out-of-state agencies allowed to apply?

   Response: Yes. This solicitation is open to all vendors.

3. If we cannot attend the pre-proposal meeting in person, will there be a way to dial-in/teleconference into the meeting remotely?

   Response: Yes, a conference call dial-in was provided in Q&A1 dated February 22, 2016.

4. Does Houston CC currently work with an outside web design agency for the current HCC website? If yes, would you be able to disclose the firm's name and if they are participating in this RFP process?

   Response: HCC is currently working with web design agency iFactory as it relates to the existing web site and current projects.

5. Does Houston CC have an in-house web design team? If so, what is the size of this team and how will they be involved in this proposed website redesign?

   Response: HCC has a team of web content managers and developers who participate in web design, technology and management projects. This team will be integral in managing the web redesign project outlined in the RFP.

6. How many members are part of the Web Development and Governance Committee? Can you explain further about the involvement of the Chancellor's Cabinet in the approval process?

   Response: The current headcount for the committee is 30 members. The Cabinet has final approval and oversight on this project for each major phase.

7. Is there a formal 'intent to bid' form or email that we need to submit prior to the proposal due date in order to participate?

Response: No.

8. What challenges have been identified from the current HCC website?

    Response: We are looking to the discovery process to identify these challenges.

9. Who are HCC's main competitors? What strengths and weaknesses would you identify relative to HCC's competitors' websites?

    Response: HCC's main competitors include all public college options as well as all for-profit schools options.

10. Are there any general budget guidelines that we should follow? Could we be provided with a ballpark budget range, or a maximum amount the budget cannot exceed? What was the budget for the last time the HCC website was redesigned?

    Response: HCC will award the bid to the bidder who provides the best value to the college. The evaluation points for price represent 30% of the total points for this RFP. HCC does not provide ballpark or maximum budget numbers for RFP. Vendors are expected to provide their best bid based on the services required in this RFP.

11. What is your anticipated <u>budget and time</u> allocation for the Discovery Phase vs. Design & Build Phase of the website redesign project?

    Response: In Section 2 (Price Proposal) sub-section 3 (Detailed Monthly Cost Breakdown) and 4 (4), each proposer is asked to provide "Detailed Schedules." Proposers should include the tasks, timeline and cost as part of these sections.

12. How many iterations of usability testing sessions are we allowed to build into our proposal? (Typically, you'd want to test your existing website and all related materials prior to redesign efforts begin and test iteratively, every two weeks as design is being constructed and test with users after design and during build phases).

    Response: This question is best answered based on best practices for usability which should be contained in the proposal. At this point, HCC would foresee doing testing on both existing and new designs.

13. Is there budget for persona development at the start of this project (by way of in-depth user and stakeholder interviews, observations and focus session(s)?

    Response: We are looking to develop personas during the discovery phase, so there would not be a separate budget allocated for that.

14. How many rounds of design wire framing is expected? Typically you will want at least 3-4 rounds of design revisions per page before building demo prototypes.

    Response: This question is best-answered based on best practices for wire framing which should be contained in the proposal. However, three to four rounds is a good range but more may be required depending on feedback from the Cabinet and Web Governance Committee.

15. Are all milestone meetings in-person (in Houston)?

    Response: HCC would highly recommend all milestone meetings be on site at HCC.

16. Please describe three major needs that this project will address. How is the old system not meeting these needs?

    Response: The major needs will be defined in the findings to the usability study that is Phase 1 of the project.

17. The Phase 1 description mentions that the chosen partner should define branding. Can you explain in more detail what is expected here?

    Response: While HCC is not specifically looking to rebrand, the discovery process might reveal the need for a new marketing approach or strategy that could impact the design. We are looking for a vendor with the expertise to strategize about HCC's branding should that happen and deliver a design that speaks to that.

18. How much of the existing content will be repurposed for the new site? Is it expected that any repurposed content also be restructured to fit new page layouts, or should we assume that the existing content structure will remain the same?

    Response: The amount of existing content that needs to be repurposed will depend on the discovery and information architecture phases, including an inventory of current content and key findings from discovery process to determine top-priority content for each audience/persona.

19. Who will be responsible for providing original content for the new site?

    Response: HCC Communications will source any and all content whether migrated or new content.

20. It's unclear if CMS integration should be included in this project. On page 7, the RFP mentions that the chosen partner should work with the CMS vendor. What are your expectations for integrating the coded website into the content management system?

    Response: Yes. CMS integration is integral to this project.

21. Should we consider multiple languages for the redesign?

    Response: HCC currently uses Google translate. If the usability findings recommend a better solution, this will need to be a part of the recommendations.

22. The RFP mentions several third party technology platforms that should be integrated with the new site. Please describe which of these needs to be dynamically integrated (for example, through an API or some other complex method) and provide details if available. Don't worry about the ones that need a simple integration like an iFrame, a link, or code snippet.

    Response: Most of the third-party solutions use a simple integration (embed code, iFrames). However, it is possible that some API-driven solutions will emerge during the discovery phase, such as with the student information system or LMS.

23. Will the blogs remain in Wordpress outside of the site, or will blog be built on the new platform? If blogs are built on the new platform, who will be responsible for migrating data into the new platform?

    Response: Blogs will remain in WordPress unless usability leads to another solution.

24. What is the makeup of the Web Development and Governance Committee? How large is the group and how will decisions be made?

    Response: The current headcount for the committee is 30 members. The Cabinet has final approval and oversight on this project for each major phase.

25. Is usability testing expected on the existing website or only on wireframes or prototypes created for the new website?

    Response: Usability testing is expected on the existing website.

26. Please describe the level of search engine optimization consulting you are expecting on this project. Should the site simply be optimized for best practices or is a deeper keyword analysis, competitive analysis, strategic plan, and content optimization expected?

    Response: Search engine optimization should be factored into the information architecture phase, when top-priority content is identified and organized, but a complete SEO analysis is beyond the scope of this project. SEO best practices should be throughout the site.

27. What type of hosting environment will the new site be deployed on? Please provide operating system, scripting languages and database servers that will be available.

    Response: Site is hosted by CMS vendor TERMINALFOUR | Apache Tomcat | Linux amd64 | Java Version 1.6.0_45 | MySQL Version 5.1.73

28. What technical requirements must the new system adhere to? Should the site be built on a specific technology platform (for example, .NET, PHP, etc.)?

    Response: No specific technology platform is required.

29 How important is security? Are there specific security standards that the new system must meet?

    Response: Security standards for the marketing site must conform to those required by our CMS vendor.

30. Will the system store any personally identifiable information? Will this data be stored locally or with another provider?

    Response: No.

31. Who are the key audience groups that will use the new system? What needs will they have that must be fulfilled?

    Response: These need to be identified during the discovery phase.

32. What key user journeys must be completed on the new site? Are their major goals that users need to complete in order for the site to be useful to them?

    Response: These need to be identified during the discovery phase.

33. Will this project require a substantial amount of data or content migration from the old system to the new one? If so, who will be responsible for this migration?

Response: The scope of the content migration will be determined during the discovery and information architecture phases. Preferably, the selected vendor will work with HCC and the CMS vendor to automate the content migration, but HCC staff will also be available as needed.

34. Is the new system required to meet federal accessibility standards? If so, to what level?

    Response: Yes, the system must be ADA compliant.

35. How will the decision to move forward with this project be made? What is the process like?

    Response: Proposers will be evaluated and a recommendation is presented to the HCC Board of Trustees for approval. The current solicitation schedule is located on page 2 of the RFP.

36. What project management process will work best for this project: waterfall, agile, a hybrid of those, or something different?

    Response: At vendor's discretion.

37. Once the project has started, what will the makeup of the decision making committee be like? Will decisions be made by a large group, a small committee, or a single person?

    Response: The successful bidder will work directly with the HCC Director of District Print and eMedia who will lead the project. The Director will work with the successful bidder to provide updates on the status of the project to the Web Governance and Development Committee and to resolve any issues related to the implementation. The Web Development and Governance Committee is chaired by the Vice Chancellor of IT. The committee make up is on page 5 of the RFP. See RFP section 1 subsections 7.B.i, 7.C.iv, 7.D.iv, 7.E.iii, 7.E.v, 7.F.vi for more information on required presentations and approvals.

38. Who are the key stakeholders involved in the decision and what role will each one play?

    Response: The HCC Director of District Print and eMedia will lead the project and be responsible for reporting the status and findings to the Web Development and Governance Committee. The Web Development and Governance Committee is chaired by the Vice Chancellor of IT. The committee make up is on page 5 of the RFP.

39. Is there someone who could be considered an incumbent on this project? Is there another company that you've worked with before that would receive preference for winning this project?

    Response: Award of a contract resulting from this RFP will be made in accordance with the RFP's published evaluation criteria and based on the proposals final ranking.

40. How critical is this project? Is this something your organization must have or is this something you would like to have?

    Response: This project is critical to the organization.

41. Please provide general budget guidelines. Even a rough ballpark estimate or range would be very helpful. Do you imagine this project to be $100k, $500k, or $1M+?

    Response: The services as described in this RFP are new therefore there is no historical annual budget for such services.

42. 42. The SBE designation seems difficult to obtain. For example, the City of Houston requires us to be a construction company (see application listed here: https://www.houstontx.gov/obo/docsandforms/sbeapplication.pdf). The City of Austin has the same requirement. Will you accept us as a small business enterprise if we meet the SBA definition of a small business and we've been approved for SBA financing in the past?

    Response: To participate, small businesses must be certified by an agency or organization whose certification is recognized by HCC. HCC recognizes certification by the following governmental and private agencies:

    - Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) SBE Certification;
    - City of Houston SBE Certification;
    - Texas Department of Transportation SBE Certification;
    - City of Austin SBE Certification;
    - South Central Texas Regional Certification Agency SBE Certification; and
    - Small Business Administration 8(a).

43. The RFP mentions that proposals should include examples of past work for each phase of the project. Will it suffice to share past work that is similar to all phases of this project, or should each phase of this project be accompanied by a unique example of past work?

    Response: Proposers are encouraged to provide as complete a proposal they feel will allow for evaluation and allocation of available points in accordance with the published evaluation criteria.

44. The RFP asks to mention all contracts that ended in the last three years. Should this section include any projects that, once the website launched, were complete? Or, should it include only ongoing support/services that were canceled or ended?

    Response: Proposers are encouraged to provide as complete a proposal they feel will allow for evaluation and allocation of available points in accordance with the published evaluation criteria. It is recommended that you provide work that was completed at time of go-live in addition to any that includes ongoing support/services.

45. If, as a small business, we can complete all of the work on this project internally, can we earn the full points for this portion of the proposal evaluation? Or, do we have to sub-contract a portion of the process to *another* small business to receive full points?

    Response: If a Small Business Proposer plans to self-perform such work instead of subcontracting to another small business, HCC will award only one-half (1/2) of the eligible points for small business participation to the Small Business Proposer for that portion of the Contract self-performed and not subcontracted to another small business (provided they are certified by one of the HCC approved certification agencies). In order to receive the full points, the proposer must sub-contract with an SBE that is certified by one of the HCC approved certification agencies.

46. If we are required to sub-contract a portion of this project in order to receive full consideration, must the sub-contracted portion be at least 25% of the entire project?

    Response: Yes, the proposer must sub-contract with an SBE that is certified by one of the HCC approved certification agencies.

47. How often would an agency located outside of Houston be expected to meet with HCC in person?

Response: HCC would highly recommend all milestone meetings for each phase be on site at HCC. Additionally, the discovery phase may also require vendor to be onsite, for example, with facilitated user testing sessions.

48. Can the proposal be submitted in landscape format? Or should it be portrait layout?

Response: The format is at proposer's discretion; however proposers must follow the Document Format as prescribed in Section 4.3.

49. Re: Quality Control -- Do you prefer the eventual vendor measure quality on specific metrics? Are there certain considerations the vendor should include in their quality control evaluation?

Response: HCC will expect that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be defined during the discovery phase. The quality of the website will be based on the KPIs.

50. What CMS are you currently using?

Response: TERMINALFOUR Site Manager -- see RFP > Section 1 – Project Overview & Scope of Services > 3. General Information.

51. I understand the Chancellor's authority to execute contracts valued up to $75,000. Is the Board and/or website redesign team open to estimates beyond that mark? If so, what extended budget does your team have in mind?

Response: It is anticipated that this project will be presented to the HCC Board of Trustees for approval. The services as described in this RFP are new therefore there is no historical annual budget for such services.

52. Will HCC need the vendor to create new content, photography, video, illustrations and graphics as needed?

Response: No.

53. Do web graphic guidelines currently exist?

Response: See www.hccs.edu/brand for brand and web guidelines.

54. Does HCC have a strategy in place to drive traffic to the new website?

Response: The strategies to drive traffic to the new web site are expected outcomes of the redesign project. These strategies will be formed during the discovery/usability phase.

55. Section 5: 5.A.i. Are there specific audiences for which usability tests are desired, or a specific number of usability testing sessions desired?

Response: Yes, the expectation is that specific audiences will be clearly defined during the discovery phase.

56. Section 5: 5.A.ii. Could you identify the number of systems a prospective HCC student could touch during registration and enrollment?

Response: During registration and enrollment a student encounters multiple systems, from the main website and PeopleSoft to Eagle Online and Outlook webmail.

57. Section 5: 5.A.iii. Has a list or number of the desired stakeholder meeting participants been identified?

Response: No, we are looking to the vendor to determine the most effective number of stakeholders to meet with.

58. Section 6 E Site Launch, Section iv: How long do you anticipate vendor will continue to improve HCC website after launch? Will you need an estimate for ongoing maintenance/improvements?

Response: Proposers may provide optional pricing for ongoing maintenance/improvements as a subsection to the Dedicated Staffing noted under Section 2 – Price Proposal

59. Section 7 D Designs: Do you envision the functional demo sites with UI design applied (color, fonts, photography) or more as interactive wireframe prototypes that get the functionality across?

Response: Yes, demos with UI design will be presented for final approval with Web Governance and the cabinet.

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