

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Internal Program / Project Manager for System Transformation Vermont State Colleges System

ISSUED BY

Vermont State Colleges Office of the Chancellor

APPLICATION DEADLINE

April 13, 2021, 5:00 pm, EST

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Email PDF versions of all documents to Sharron.Scott@vsc.edu by the deadline, using the following naming convention:

- **Email Subject Line:** System Transformation RFP Response
- **Organization and Personnel Qualifications:** Applicant_Name_RFP_Qualifications.pdf
- **References:** Applicant_Name_RFP_References.pdf
- **Fee Proposal:** Applicant_Name_RFP_Fees.pdf

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE RFP

Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to Sharron.Scott@vsc.edu. For fastest response please enter **System Transformation RFP Question** in the subject line of your message.

Please note, responses to questions will be available to all bidders.

INTRODUCTION – VERMONT STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM

The [Vermont State Colleges System](#) (VSCS) is comprised of four member institutions – [Castleton University](#) (CU), [Community College of Vermont](#) (CCV), [Northern Vermont University](#) (NVU)¹, and [Vermont Technical College](#) (VTC). Across all four institutions, the system educates over ten thousand Vermonters and non-Vermonters each year, employs over three thousand Vermonters, and in Spring 2020, graduated over eighteen hundred Vermonters and out-of-state students into the workforce with certificates and degrees.²

The VSCS is currently undergoing a significant transformation, with the guidance of the Governor, Legislature, the Board of Trustees, and the State’s *Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont*. The VSCS began working on internal transformation in summer 2020 with the [VSCS Forward Task Force](#) and several institutional tasks forces including [NVU Strong](#) and [VTC’s Transformation Advisory Team](#).

INTRODUCTION – TRANSFORMATION PRINCIPLES

As the VSCS continues this transformation, we are converting many of the challenges we have confronted, both pandemic-related and financial, into opportunities for transforming the system to better deliver for Vermont and the students we serve for decades to come. Our efforts have focused on three key questions: first, does the action meet the needs of students; second, does the proposal meet the needs of Vermont; and, third does it contribute to the VSCS’s financial sustainability?

Student success is the key focus of the Vermont State Colleges: We are committed to delivering on the higher education and continuing education needs of Vermont and Vermonters while preserving the high-touch, personalized approach and close-knit campus communities that the VSCS is known for. While doing that, we seek to better serve students where they are with a learning modality that works for them, on a schedule that works for them, with the courses, programs, credentials, credit bearing and non-credit-bearing, that provide them with the skills they need to attain their life goals, and at a price they can afford.

Education for life: We create opportunities for Vermonters at every point in their adult life, from early college/dual enrollment programs for high school students, to credentials of value for working adults and those seeking to upskill and reskill. We recognize that, moving forward, we need to develop even more high-quality educational opportunities that meet the needs of students, employers, and the state, by expanding the availability of credentials of value, such as associate’s degrees and credentials and certificates that will enable students to secure higher-

¹ Northern Vermont University was created on July 1, 2018 from the merger of Lyndon State College and Johnson State College. The unification effort was approved on [September 29, 2016](#) by the board and fully completed by June 30, 2018. [Unification documentation](#) can be found on the VSC website.

²[VSCS Sourcebooks](#) as well as [Board & Committee Meeting Materials and Minutes](#) are available on the System’s website.

paying employment or advance at work. Additionally, we need to continue our work to create stackable credentials within degree programs to provide the maximum value and flexibility to our students.

Vermont is our community: In addition to serving our students and meeting the workforce needs of Vermont, we are looking to maintain our physical presence in each of our current host communities, combining a reduced physical footprint with expanded access to academic programs state-wide. Rural public institutions, such as ours, provide crucial educational and employment opportunities to local residents, serve as economic, social and cultural anchors in their host communities, and help to educate workers in high demand local industries, such as health care, education, business, mental health counseling, and hospitality and tourism.

Consolidation of administrative functions: To achieve fiscal sustainability, we recognize that we need to reduce administrative costs. A common accreditation for three of our four institutions, as proposed by the Select Committee, will enable the VSCS to avoid duplication, increase efficiency, improve compliance, and reduce costs.

INTRODUCTION - TRANSFORMATION OVERVIEW

The Vermont State Colleges System is embarking on a period of transformation. This transformation includes the consolidation of three institutions into a singly-accredited entity, administrative transformation, and physical transformation over the next five years.

These transformation efforts will right size the Vermont State College System into a financially sustainable organization that meets the needs of Vermont and Vermonters now and into the future.

Primary inputs into this decision include the following:

- Reports from Vermont's *Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont*. Including the most recent [Revised Report](#) from the Select Committee.
- A [High-Level Plan for evaluation of Select Committee recommendations](#) as approved by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees
- [VSCS Structural Transformation Preliminary Analysis](#) as submitted to the Board of Trustees
- Written and oral public comment, a copy of which can be viewed www.vsc.edu/live and read [here](#).
- A preliminary [project plan](#) for system transformation presented by the Chancellor and approved by the VSCS's Board of Trustees on February 22, 2021.

GENERAL DISCLAIMER

This RFP does not commit the Vermont State Colleges System to award a contract. This RFP and the process it describes are proprietary to the VSCS and are for the sole and exclusive benefit of the corporation. No other party, including any Applicant, is granted any rights hereunder. Any response, including written documents and verbal communication, by any Applicant to this RFP, shall become the property of the VSCS and may be subject to public disclosure as described in the Confidentiality section, below.

SERVICES REQUESTED

The Vermont State Colleges System seeks a firm or individual to serve as the internal program / project manager. This individual or firm will serve as the overall director of transformation projects for the Vermont State Colleges System (VSCS), employing program and project management practices to deliver enterprise-wide projects on time, on budget, and meeting stated objectives. The Director will report directly to the Chancellor and serve as a member of the Chancellor's Senior Leadership Team for the purposes of transformation.

CHARACTERISTIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lead a team of up to five designated project managers from across the Vermont State Colleges to coordinate the transformation projects, as directed by the Chancellor;
- Establish disciplined project management practices and ensure the application of such practices across all transformation projects;
- Direct project managers to provide detailed project planning, resource forecasting, and financial planning for all projects;
- Track all transformation projects and, when necessary, negotiate bottlenecks and resource constraints between projects;
- Direct and coordinate project managers' efforts to monitor, track, and control outcomes; dependencies and critical path deliverables to deliver projects on time, on budget, and that meet stated objectives;
- Resolve cross-project issues and conflicts;
- Maintain multi-project planning, implementation, and audit dashboard;
- Direct project managers in the identification of risks and mitigation strategies to minimize project risks;
- Develop requests for proposal and oversee the hiring process, in conjunction with key stakeholders, of external consultants to complete sections of the VSCS transformation portfolio of projects where necessary;
- Coordinate and direct project managers to ensure the overall program is aligned to and directly supports the achievement of VSC strategic objectives;
- Work creatively and analytically in a problem-solving environment demonstrating teamwork, innovation and excellence;

- Regularly communicate progress to the Council of Presidents, Chancellor, and Board of Trustees; and
- Other related activities.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree in computer science, information systems, business, finance, or related field;
- Dedicated and proven (minimum 3 years) project manager with successful experience working across complex organizations (higher education experience preferred)
- Proven ability to work creatively and analytically to adjust to shifting priorities, demands, and timelines demonstrating teamwork, innovation and excellence.
- Strong leadership, diplomatic and motivational skills including the ability to lead up, across and down multiple entities and departments
- Excellent communication (written, verbal, and presentation) and interpersonal skills
- Experience leading, motivating, and managing various project and program teams of varying sizes, including internal and external resources, while holding each team accountable for performance
- Strong experience presenting to executive sponsors and demonstrated communication skills
- Experience influencing and gaining buy-in from executive sponsors, team members, stakeholders, and peers
- Technically competent with various software programs, including but not limited to Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Visio), and project planning software
- Interpersonal skills to influence and spur change, facilitate and enhance performance within a cross-functional, multi-campus, multi-cultural, and geographically dispersed environment
- Demonstrated decisiveness in resolving business problems, making decisions, and identifying priorities
- Ability to train stakeholders in project management processes

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Project management experience in one of the primary project management approaches such as PMI;
- 5 to 10+ years of project management experience, including tracking and planning projects;
- Project management certification in a recognized major project management methodology or equivalent experience;
- 3+ years multi-project portfolio management
- Detailed evidence of successful projects that cross multiple business lines, organizations, or other similarly complex organizations; and,
- Intermediate level of proficiency with MS Project, Excel, and PowerPoint with experience presenting to stakeholders and Senior Leadership.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- The program / project manager will report to the Chancellor of the VSCS;
- The incumbent will report regular status of the project;
- The successful Applicant will submit a monthly invoice detailing the services and/or products provided, the goals/tasks accomplished, and associated costs;
- Monthly progress reports shall be prepared describing accomplishments, decisions, and overall progress made during the period. It shall contain updated project schedule and budget information and shall specifically include information regarding RFIs, change orders, submittals as well as the Consultant's invoice status. Progress reports will be submitted with each monthly invoice.

TERM AND TIME COMMITMENT

- VSCS transformation will take approximately five years. This contract is for one year. Subject to available funding and perceived performance, the VSCS may renew this agreement for up to four additional one-year terms;
- The program / project manager should anticipate working approximately 48 weeks a year at 40-60 hours a week.

BUDGET

- The estimated budget for the Program / Project Manager is between \$175,000 and \$215,000 annually;
- The fee proposal must be issued as a not-to-exceed budget for the full scope of work.

HOURS AND LOCATION OF WORK

- The program / project manager should anticipate working approximately 48 weeks a year at 40-60 hours a week;
- The majority of work can be performed remotely;
- The program / project manager may be required to attend up to six meetings a year in Vermont.

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MONITORING & SECURITY

By submission of a proposal in response to this RFP, the Applicant agrees that it will comply with all contract monitoring and evaluation activities undertaken by the VSCS, and will comply with all VSCS security policies and requirements.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR STATUS

The successful Applicant shall be an independent contractor and, therefore, responsible for payment of all payroll taxes. The contractor will not be covered under any VSCS insurance programs including, but not limited to, medical and dental insurance, legal and professional liability, worker compensation, and life insurance.

As a contractor for the VSCS, the program / project manager will be required to maintain insurance. Specific policies and minimum limit(s) will be commensurate with the scope of work performance and will be determined with the contractor once selected. Proof of such insurance may be required.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Vermont State Colleges System complies 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 System during the RFP process could be subject to a public records request. However, certain public records are exempt from public inspection and copying, as set forth in 1 VSA § 317(c), including, for example, those portions of a record which 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.

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SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All submissions are due no later than 5:00 pm EST on Tuesday, April 13, 2021. In three (3) separate documents, to be named as outlined on Application Instructions page, please provide the following:

1. **Organization and Personnel Qualifications:** Provide a statement of qualifications and capability to perform the services sought by this RFP, including:
 - a. Description of relevant experience with projects that are similar in nature, size, and scope to that which is the subject of this RFP.
 - b. Qualifications, experience and education for personnel working on this engagement including education level, skillset (described in detail), experience level, and job title along with a resume. Relevance with similar projects should be cited.
 - c. The number of days following the VSCS's authorization to proceed by which the Applicant will be ready to begin work, including mobilization of resources.

2. **References:** Provide references from three to five clients or employers performing work of similar complexity. In each reference include the following:
 - a. Project name and description including primary project scope, description of complexity, communication, and project management methodologies employed.
 - b. Duration and size of project. In this section include the beginning and end dates of the project, numbers of partners/clients/constituencies served by the project, estimated project cost, total project hours
 - c. Name of company
 - d. Project sponsor name, telephone number, and email address.

3. **Fee Proposal:** Provide a fee proposal for the initial term together with proposal(s) for each subsequent term. The VSCS will accept only not-to-exceed orders billed monthly.

4. **Redacted Copy:** Provide a second copy of the proposal, redacting any portion of the proposal that is reasonably believed to be exempt from disclosure under the Vermont Public Records Act.

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