

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Vermont Pathways to Partnerships
WEBSITE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT
JULY 29, 2024

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SUMMARY

The Vermont Family Network (VFN) of Williston, Vermont is accepting proposals to design and develop a website for the Vermont Pathways to Partnerships (VT-P2P) project. The VT-P2P project is a five-year project funded by the Disability Innovation Fund, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education. This project brings together a board array of Vermont partners who understand the needs of Vermont children and youth with disabilities transitioning from high school to adulthood and are positioned to create enhanced pathways to successful employment and postsecondary outcomes.

The purpose of this request for proposal (RFP) is to provide a fair evaluation for all candidates and to provide candidates with the evaluation criteria against which they will be judged.

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

This is an open and competitive process

Proposals received after 12:00pm/noon EST, August 16, 2024 will not be considered.

The proposal must contain the signature of the duly authorized officer of the company submitting the proposal.

The price you quote should be inclusive. If your price excludes certain fees or charges, you must provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees.

CONTRACT TERMS

The VT-P2P partners will negotiate the contract terms upon selection. All contracts are subject to review by legal counsel, and a project will be awarded upon signing of an agreement or contract, which outlines terms, scope, budget, and other necessary items.

PURPOSE, DESCRIPTION, AND OBJECTIVES

Purpose:

The VT-P2P is a new federally funded project providing information to Vermont children and youth with disabilities who experience many challenges transitioning successfully

from high school to adulthood. This project brings together a broad array of partners who understand their needs and are positioned to create enhanced pathways to successful employment and postsecondary outcomes. Creating an inclusive web-based portal with comprehensive, accessible information is critical to this project's success. Through the website, youth, families, and VT-P2P partners will have access to a tool that explains adult services and the postsecondary opportunities available to youth and young adults in an easy-to-understand and intuitive-to-navigate format.

Description:

Create a flexible, inclusive, accessible, and informative web site that is easy to maintain. The web site must be flexible and user-friendly while capable of delivering large amounts of constantly changing information to our key audiences. In addition to a user-friendly site with an intuitive and accessible interface, the website must include a web-based, database-driven administration tool that allows key management personnel to easily update content without accessing source code.

VT-P2P will maintain editorial and administration control of the content on the website, preferably by using a system with a browser-based user interface.

To be effective, the web site must be:

- Accessible following the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards
- Intuitive and easy to use
- Informative
- Safe and secure
- Quick to load and operate
- Easily maintainable
- Visually appealing

Objective:

VT-P2P's objective is to provide a comprehensive information web-based portal where youth and young adults with disabilities, their families, and professionals can access valuable and current information for transitioning from high school to successful employment and postsecondary outcomes.

VT-P2P Vision for web site:

- Improve self-advocacy of youth with disabilities by providing readily accessible information via an easy-to-use web site.
- Improve student with disability transition outcomes by empowering them with the comprehensive information needed to develop ambitious transition plans that create meaningful pathways and outcomes in postsecondary education and employment.

- Provide one comprehensive source of information that explains opportunities available to students with disabilities who are transitioning from high school.
- Report high engagement and satisfaction of the web site by after 3 years.

TIMELINE

- This RFP is dated July 29, 2024. Proposers may also request a copy be sent via email by contacting Michelle Kessler at michelle.kessler@vtfn.org.
- Proposals are due no later than 12:00 pm/noon EST, Friday, August 16, 2024.
- Proposals will be evaluated immediately thereafter. During this time, the VT-P2P partners may require interviews with our evaluation team. Proposers will be notified if this is requested.
- The name of the candidate firm who has been selected will be decided on or about Monday, August 26, 2024.
- Negotiations will begin immediately with the successful candidate and should conclude no later than September 20, 2024
- All other candidates will be notified on or about September 20, 2024.
- Project deliverable dates will be determined during the negotiations.

BUDGET

Please provide cost proposal to accomplish the scope outlined below. The budget must encompass all design, production, training, and software acquisitions necessary for development, implementation, and maintenance of the web site.

Hosting will be addressed separately and costs for hosting are not included in the budget for this project.

List pricing for:

- Phase I: Discovery, Requirements Planning, and Site Definition.
- Phase II: Site Development, Testing, and Implementation.

The VT-P2P project has allocated \$25,000 for this project (Phase I and Phase II). However, we will entertain responses greater than \$25,000 if the proposal shows an incremental project plan.

SCOPE AND GUIDELINES

The scope of this project is to create an accessible, inclusive, informative, and user-friendly web site. The site must include a technology solution that allows the in-house VT-P2P staff to easily and cost effectively update content and modify site design after the initial launch.

Discovery:

Confirm demographics, audience, objectives, graphics look and feel, navigation, technology, required functionality, and budgetary constraints, resulting in the creative brief for the web site design.

Design:

Design the web site information architecture, graphic look and feel, user navigation, accessibility, inclusiveness, home page and main navigation templates for each navigation link.

Development and Implementation:

The web site designed by the successful candidate must meet the following criteria:

- Create a content management system that will enable non-technical staff to instantly update the web site content on specific pages.
- Visually appealing – the site must have a mix of text and graphics.
- Accessible to individuals with disabilities following the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards.
- Secure and safe.
- Common theme – each section of the web site should have a common look and feel with the VT-P2P logo prominently displayed on every page.
- Consistent Design with each section of the site using a common look and feel of graphics/photographs, fonts, and layouts.
- Easy to navigate – the site should be easy to navigate. Information should be grouped and presented in a logical manner and require no more than three levels

of “drill down” for users to find the desired information.

- Provide search capabilities using key words or phrasing that will identify content throughout the site.
- The site must have a tracking tool providing the following information:
 - Web traffic analysis
 - Path analysis
 - Visitor trends
 - Page views
 - Entry pages
 - Top pages
 - Exit pages
- Once the web site has been completed, tested, and accepted by VT-P2P, the web site design and all of its contents, software, and architecture become the property of VT-P2P.

QUALIFICATIONS

- List five web sites you firm has produced that best reflect your work and relevancy to this project. Briefly list the role your firm played in each project. The URL should be submitted. Only sites that are live will qualify during evaluation.
- Describe your experience in producing sites for non-profit organizations and or community focused projects.
- Provide current references for three former or current clients.
- Briefly describe your organizational capacity to produce our web site (e.g. staff, equipment, software, physical space, office location, etc.)
- Provide company profile, length of time in business.
- What type of team will be assigned to this project? What will each person’s role be? Please provide a brief background summary for each key staff member assigned to the project.

- Briefly describe your firm’s project management process.
- Discuss your testing and support plans.
- Include all terms and conditions.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Submit proposal no later than 12:00 pm/noon, Friday, August 16, 2024 EST to Vermont Family Network. Proposals may be submitted via email or mailed to the below address:

Mail: Michelle Kessler
Director of Operations and Planning
Vermont Family Network – ATTN: VT-P2P Project
600 Blair Park Road, suite 240
Williston, Vermont 05495

Email: michelle.kessler@vtfn.org

Proposals that meet the mandatory requirements will be evaluated with the following criteria:

- Suitability of the proposal – the proposed solution meets the needs and criteria set forth in this RFP.
- Expertise in recommending and communicating appropriate technical and aesthetic solutions as evidenced by the proposal and references.
- Aesthetic capabilities – prior work demonstrates artistic and innovative, user-friendly interfaces that engage communities and viewers.
- Experience – candidate has successfully completed similar projects and has the qualifications necessary to undertake this project.
- Value/Pricing structure and price levels – price is commensurate with the value offered by the proposer.
- Depth and breadth of staff – the candidate firm has appropriate staff to develop the site in the time frame needed.

- Proposal presentation – the information in the proposal is clear and organized.
- Demonstrated commitment to high service level agreement.

FORMAT FOR PROPOSALS

Please use the following as a guideline to format your proposal:

Length and Font Size:

Font should be sans serif and no smaller than 11-point. Maximum proposal length should not exceed 20 pages, excluding the title and cover pages.

Title Page:

Title page should include the

Project name:

Vermont Pathways to Partnerships Website Design & Development Project

Candidate organization information:

Name, address, primary contact information

Cover Letter:

1 – 2 pages and signed by the person(s) authorized to sign on behalf of the company.

Proposal:

Discuss your proposed solution, including the features, benefits, and uniqueness of your solution. Touch on your organization's ability to deliver the project timely.

Include qualifications, budget, and fees in the proposal.

Sign and date the proposal.