

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Specification and Contract Number Q01132
Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Platform Solution

Deadline for any Questions
Regarding this Project:

November 2, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. Local Time

Submission Deadline
for Proposals:

December 7, 2023 at 2:00 P.M. Local Time

Number of Copies:

Submit (2) Hard Copies of the Proposal,
One (1) Marked "Original"
(1) Copies of the Pricing (Separate Sealed
Envelope)
One additional copy of Proposal & Pricing on a flash
drive

Return Proposals To:

William Rainey Harper College
Purchasing Department
Building A, Room A217
1200 W. Algonquin Road
Palatine, Illinois 60067-7398

PLEASE MARK THE
RETURN ENVELOPES:

- 1. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Platform Solution**
- 2. December 7, 2023**
- 3. Q01132**

Issued By:

Karen McCoy
Purchasing Specialist

PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BY FACSIMILE OR E-MAIL WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

LEGAL NOTICE

Harper College will accept Proposals for **Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Platform Solution**, Specification and Contract Number **Q01132**, until 2:00 P.M. Central Time, on **December 7, 2023**.

Proposals shall be submitted to: William Rainey Harper College
Purchasing Department
Building A, Room A217
1200 W. Algonquin Road
Palatine, Illinois 60067-7398

Interested parties may contact the Purchasing Department for the Request for Proposals documents. Questions regarding this request for proposal should be addressed to Karen McCoy at purchasing@harpercollege.edu. The last day to submit questions is **November 2, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. Central Time**. Questions received after this time may not receive a written response.

Offers may not be withdrawn for a period of 90 days after the closing date without the consent of the Board of Trustees.

Any Proposal submitted unsealed, unsigned, fax transmissions or received subsequent to the aforementioned date and time may be disqualified and returned to the submitter.

Bidders shall comply with Business Enterprise Program: Participation and Utilization Plan developed by Harper College. There is a 30 percent aspirational goal on this contract.

Harper College reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or parts thereof, to waive any irregularities or informalities in the Request for Proposal (RFP) procedures and to award the contract in a manner best serving the interest of the College.

Karen McCoy
Purchasing Specialist

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

GENERAL PROCESSING AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

The following procedures are generally used in the selection of vendors to provide professional services:

1. The Evaluation Committee is formed to evaluate the RFP responses.
2. The committee prepares a project description, criteria for selection and requirements for the specific contract. A Request for Proposals package is emailed to interested parties and a legal notice of the intent to contract for services is published.
3. The committee receives written RFP responses. The RFP responses should include a resume of the firm, references from past and present clients, similar experience, the names and background of project personnel, a narrative or work plan describing their approach to the specific project, completed Attachment A and Attachment B, a project task schedule (as applicable), and any other submittals requested within the document.
4. The committee reviews and evaluates the RFPs based on the established selection criteria and a comparison of all RFP responses submitted. If necessary, the committee will request a demonstration with one or more Respondents to clarify and/or expand on the response. In accordance with the requirements of the RFPs, the College may negotiate terms, conditions and fees with the successful Respondent.
5. The committee selects the RFP response which, based on the ability to meet the criteria, appears to be the most advantageous selection for the College, and subsequently recommends contract award to the Executive Vice President.
6. Harper College reserves the right to reject all Proposals or parts thereof, to waive any irregularities or informalities in the Request for Proposals (RFP) procedures and to award the contract in a manner best serving the interest of the College.
7. The contract is presented for approval to the College Board of Trustees.

GENERAL INFORMATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFPs)

A. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

A.01 General:

A.01.1 Definition:

Request for Proposals (RFP) is a method of procurement permitting discussions with responsible Respondents and revisions to responses prior to award of a contract. Proposals will be opened and evaluated in private. Award will be based on the criteria set forth herein.

A.01.2 Familiarity with Conditions:

Respondents are advised to become familiar with all conditions, instructions and specifications governing this RFP. Once the award has been made, failure to have read all the conditions, instructions and specifications of this Request for Proposals, and any subsequent contract, shall not be cause to alter the original contract or request additional compensation.

A.02 Discussion of Proposals:

A.02.1 All Respondents are advised that in the event of receipt of an adequate number of RFPs, which in the opinion of the Selection Committee requires no clarification and/or supplementary information, such RFP responses may be evaluated without discussion. Hence, Proposals should be initially submitted on the most complete and favorable terms which Respondents are capable of offering to the College.

A.02.2 The Selection Committee may conduct discussions with any Respondent who submits acceptable or potentially acceptable Proposals. Respondents shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion and revision of Qualification responses. During the course of such discussions, the Selection Committee shall not disclose any information derived from one Qualification response to any other Respondent. The Selection Committee reserves the right to request the Respondent to provide additional information during this process. Neither the Selection Committee nor any other member of Harper's staff will conduct debriefings regarding the RFP process.

A.02.3 During discussions, the Respondent shall be prepared to cover the following topics:

A.02.3.1 The specific services to be provided;

A.02.3.2 Proposals of the Respondent, including work on similar projects, experience of personnel, etc;

A.02.3.3 The working relationship to be established between the College and the Respondent, including, but not limited to, what each party should expect from the other.

- A.03 Negotiations:
Harper College reserves the right to negotiate specifications, terms and conditions which may be necessary or appropriate to the accomplishment of the purpose of this RFP. The College may require the RFP and the Respondent's entire Qualification response be made an integral part of the resulting contract. This implies that all responses, supplemental information, and other submissions provided by the Respondent during discussions or negotiations will be held by Harper College as contractually binding on the successful Respondent.
- A.04 Notice of Unacceptable Responses:
When the Selection Committee determines a firm's RFP response to be unacceptable, such Respondent shall not be afforded an additional opportunity to supplement its RFP Response.
- A.05 Confidentiality:
The Purchasing Department shall examine the Proposals to determine the validity of any written requests for nondisclosure of trade secrets and other proprietary data identified. After award of the contract, all responses, documents, and materials submitted by the Respondent pertaining to this RFP will be considered public information and will be made available for inspection, unless otherwise determined by the Purchasing Department. All data, documentation and innovations developed as a result of these contractual services shall become the property of the College. Based upon the public nature of these RFPs, a Respondent must inform the College, in writing, of the exact materials in the offer which cannot be made a part of the public record in accordance with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act.
- A.06 Proposed Timeline:
- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| RFP Issued | October 26, 2023 |
| Last Day to submit questions for a response..... | November 2, 2023 |
| Final Addendum Issue..... | November 16, 2023 |
| RFP Deadline..... | December 7, 2023 |
| Oral Interviews and Vendor Demonstrations..... | week of January 22, 2024 |
| Approval by Harper College Board of Trustees..... | April Board of 2024 |
| Implementation Begins | May 2024 |

B. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- B.01 Authority:
This Request for Proposals is issued pursuant to applicable provisions of Harper College's Purchasing Policy.
- B.02 Errors in Proposals:
Respondents are cautioned to verify their RFP response prior to submission. Negligence on the part of the Respondent in preparing the RFP response confers no right for withdrawal or modification of the RFP response.

- B.03 Reserved Rights:
Harper College reserves the right at any time and for any reason to cancel this Request for Proposals process or any portion thereof, to reject any or all submittals, or to accept alternate submittals. The College reserves the right to waive any immaterial defect in any RFP response. Unless otherwise specified by the Respondent, the College has ninety (90) days to accept. The College may seek clarification from a Respondent at any time and failure to respond promptly is cause for rejection. The College may require submission of best and final offers.
- B.04 Incurred Costs:
Harper College will not be liable in any way for any costs incurred by Respondents in replying to this RFP.
- B.05 Award:
Award shall be made by the Harper College Board of Trustees to the responsible Respondent whose Proposals are determined to be the most advantageous to the College, taking into consideration price and the evaluation criteria set forth herein. Harper College reserves the right to accept the RFP response as a whole or for any component thereof if it appears to be in the best interest of the College.
- B.06 Evaluation Considerations:
Evaluation Criteria are shown below. The Selection Committee shall consider the following when judging the ability of Respondents to meet the requirements of this Request for Proposals.
- B.06.1 Compliance with Request for Proposals [Mandatory]. This refers to the adherence to all conditions and requirements of the Request for Proposals.
- B.06.2 Quality of Response.
- B.06.2.1 Clearly demonstrated understanding of the work to be performed.
- B.06.2.2 Completeness and reasonableness of the Respondent's plan/Proposals for accomplishing the tasks.
- B.06.2.3 Level of creativity demonstrated by the Respondent's proposed methodologies for meeting the requirements of this Request for Proposals.
- B.06.3 Product/Services to be Provided. This refers to the exact type and nature of the Respondent's proposed services and how they accomplish the objectives of the project, how the proposed solution meets the College's technical requirements, as well as the ability to rapidly respond to the College's needs, as defined in the Evaluation Criteria set forth herein.
- B.06.4 Schedule. This refers to the Respondent's proposed delivery schedule. The schedule shall be a critical element of this contract.
- B.06.5 Qualifications and Experience. Respondent's capability in all respects to perform fully the contract requirements, and the tenacity, perseverance, experience, integrity, and reliability which will assure good faith performance, as well as satisfactory reference verification. These criteria include:

- B.06.5.1 The experience of the firm and its record on engagements of a similar nature, including the ability to serve in a similar capacity for other Colleges or organizations.
- B.06.5.2 Personnel to be assigned to the project, and their education, capabilities, qualifications and experience with similar projects; and
- B.06.5.3 Other areas addressed in the *Statement of Work* herein.
- B.06.6 Costs (Price). This refers to the proposed contract fee. (Please note that price is only one factor for consideration of award). **Pricing will be submitted within a separate sealed envelope so marked. Price breakdown needs to include any implementation, integrations and training fees.**
- B.06.7 Acceptability of Proposals:
The Offer shall be evaluated solely in accordance with the criteria set forth herein. The Proposals shall be categorized as follows:
 - A. Acceptable;
 - B. Potentially Acceptable; that is reasonably susceptible of being made acceptable; or
 - C. Unacceptable.
- B.07 Budget:
 - B.07.1 When requested, Respondent shall propose a not-to-exceed amount for complete execution of this project as detailed in the Specifications or Statement of Work herein.
 - B.07.2 If proposing costs which may include alternate programs or services not covered in the base bid pricing, the Respondent, when offering such alternative services must provide a detailed explanation of additional optional services to be offered.
- B.08 Contract Term:
The term of the agreement shall be twelve months with three annual optional renewals.
- B.09 Taxes:
The College is exempt from paying Illinois Use Tax, Illinois Retailers Occupation Tax, Federal Excise Tax, and Municipal Retailer's Occupation Tax. The College's Tax Exemption Letter will be provided upon award of a contract.
- B.10 Hold Harmless Clause:
The Respondent agrees to indemnify, save harmless and defend Harper College, its agents, servants, and employees, and each of them against and hold it and them harmless from any and all lawsuits, claims, demands, liabilities, losses and expenses, including court costs and attorney's fees, for or on account of any injury to any person, or any death at any time resulting from such injury, or any damage to property, which may arise or which may be alleged to have arisen out of or in connection with the work covered by this contract. The foregoing indemnity shall apply except if such injury, death or damage is caused directly by the negligent conduct of Harper College, its agents, servants, or employees or any other person indemnified hereunder.

B.11 Insurance Requirements:

Respondents shall maintain for the duration of this contract and any extensions thereof insurance issued by a company or companies qualified to do business in the State of Illinois, as enumerated in Harper College's insurance requirements. **Please state your professional liability coverage if applicable.**

Upon notice of acceptance of proposal, the successful bidder shall, within ten (10) calendar days of said notice, furnish to the College a certificate of insurance evidencing coverage by the types of insurance in the amounts specified below. Such coverage shall be placed with a responsible company acceptable to the College, licensed to do business in the State of Illinois, and with a minimum insurance rating of A: VII as found in the current edition of A M Best's Key Rating Guide. Each policy shall bear an endorsement precluding the cancellation or reduction of said policies without providing Harper College at least thirty (30) days prior notice thereof in writing. All required insurance shall be maintained by the contractor in full force and effect until such time as the subject equipment has been approved and accepted by the College.

Minimum Insurance Requirements:

General Liability	General Aggregate	\$2,000,000
	Products-Comp/Op Agg	2,000,000
	Personal Injury	1,000,000
	Each Occurrence	1,000,000
Excess Liability	Each Occurrence	1,000,000
	Aggregate	1,000,000
Automobile Liability	Bodily injury (each acc)	1,000,000
	Property damage (each acc)	1,000,000
Worker's Compensation	Statutory Limits	

Contractor shall cause each subcontractor employed by contractor to purchase and maintain insurance of the type specified above. When requested by the College, contractor shall furnish copies of certificates of insurance evidencing coverage for each subcontractor. William Rainey Harper College shall be named as an additional insured.

B.12 Meetings:

Respondent may be required to meet with various College and outside officials as required, throughout the project.

B.13 Equal Employment Opportunity:

Respondent shall comply with the Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/1-101 et seq., as amended, and any rules and regulations promulgated in accordance therewith, including, but not limited to the Equal Employment Opportunity Clause, Illinois Administrative Code, Title 44, Part 750 (Appendix A), which is incorporated herein by reference. Furthermore, the Respondent shall comply with the Public Works Employment Discrimination Act, 775 ILCS 10/0.01 et seq., as amended. Furthermore, the Respondent will comply with Executive Order 11246 of September 1965, entitled "Equal Opportunity," as amended by Executive Order 11375 of October 13, 1967, and as supplemented by the Department of labor regulations (41 CFR chapter 60). Furthermore, the Respondent shall comply with Public Act 98-107 which requires nearly any party that contracts with a community college

to post employment of vacancies with the state's job board IllinoisJobLink.com. Additionally, the Respondent shall comply with the Harper College Fair Employment Ordinance.

B.14 Responsibility & Default:

B.14.1 The awarded Respondent shall be required to assume responsibility for all items listed in this Request for Proposals. The successful Respondent shall be considered the sole point of contact for purposes of this contract.

B.14.2 Time is of the essence and shall be considered in awarding this contract. If delivery of acceptable items or rendering of services is not completed by the time promised, the College reserves the right, without liability, in addition to its other rights and remedies, to terminate the contract by written notice effective when received by the Respondent, as to stated items not yet shipped or services not yet rendered and to purchase substitute items or services elsewhere in such a manner as the Purchasing Department may deem appropriate, and charge the Respondent with any or all losses incurred. The College shall be entitled to recover its attorney's fees and expenses in any successful action by the College to enforce this contract.

B.15 Payments:

B.15.1 The Respondent shall furnish the College with itemized invoices as required as determined through negotiations with the Selection Committee.

B.15.2 All payments to be made in accordance with applicable provisions of the "Local Government Prompt Payment Act." 50 ILCS 505/1, *et seq.*

B.16 Respondent Responsibilities:

The selected Respondent will be required to assume responsibility for all services offered in this Request for Proposals. The College will consider the selected Respondent to be the sole point of contact with regard to contractual matters, including payment of any and all charges resulting from the contract. Sub-contracts will be permitted only upon specific, written permission of the College.

B.17 Interpretation or Correction of Request for Proposals:

B.17.1 Respondents shall promptly notify the Purchasing Department of any ambiguity, inconsistency or error, which they may discover upon examination of the Request for Proposals. Requests for interpretation of specifications may be made in writing, and directed to the Purchasing Department. All such requests must be delivered in a timely fashion.

B.17.2 Interpretations, corrections and changes to the Request for Proposals will be made by addendum. Interpretations, corrections or changes made in any other manner will not be binding.

B.18 Law Governing:

Any contract resulting from this RFP shall be governed by and construed according to the laws of the State of Illinois, without regard to conflict of law principles.

B.19 Compliance with Laws:

The Respondent shall at all times observe and comply with all laws, ordinances and regulations of the federal, state, local and College policy, which may in any manner affect the contract.

- B.20 Termination for Lack of Funding:
The College reserves the right to terminate the whole or any part of this contract, upon written notice to the Respondent in the event that sufficient funds to complete the contract are not appropriated by the Harper Board of Trustees; provided that in the event of such termination, the Respondent shall be paid promptly for all services rendered by the Respondent through the effective date of termination.
- B.21 Addenda:
- B.21.1 Addenda are written instruments issued by the Purchasing Department prior to the date of receipt of Proposals, which modify or interpret the RFP by addition, deletions, clarifications or corrections.
- B.21.2 Prior to the receipt of Proposals, addenda shall be distributed to all who are known to have received a complete RFP if required.
- B.21.3 After receipt of Proposals, any addenda shall be distributed only to Respondents who submitted Proposals and those Respondents shall be permitted to submit new or amended Proposals as detailed within the addenda.
- B.21.4 Each Respondent shall ascertain, prior to submitting a Proposal that all addenda issued have been received and, by submission of a Proposal, such act shall be taken to mean that such Respondent has received all addenda and that the Respondent is familiar with the terms thereof and understands fully the contents of the addenda.
- B.21.5 Respondents shall acknowledge receipt and understanding of the addenda in their response.
- B.22 Regulatory Compliance:
When applicable Respondent represents and warrants that the goods and services furnished hereunder (including all labels, packages and container for said goods) comply with all applicable standards, rules, and regulations as applicable including the Occupational Safety and Health Act as amended with respect to design, construction, manufacture or use for their intended purpose of said goods or services. Respondent shall furnish applicable "Material Safety Data Sheets" in compliance with the Illinois Toxic Substances Disclosure Act, and shall otherwise comply with the requirements of said act for materials and supplies covered by the act.
- B.23 Guarantees and Warranties:
All guarantees and warranties required shall be furnished by the Respondent and shall be delivered to the Purchasing Department before final voucher on the contract is issued.
- B.24 Right to Protest
Any bidder wishing to file a protest regarding the RFP process may do so by giving written notice to the Manager of Purchasing within seven calendar days of the closing time and date. This notice should include the title of the requirement, the closing date and the nature of the protest. Any disputes concerning a question of fact under this RFP which is not disposed of by agreement shall be decided by the College. The decision of the College for the determination of such appeals shall be final and conclusive.

B.25 Contracting with Minority Firms and Women Business Enterprise
The College has an aspirational goal of spending 30% of its budgeted expenditures with firms owned by minorities, females or persons with disabilities as required by Illinois Statute. Respondents to this request for proposals shall comply with the provisions of the Business Enterprise program, and shall submit the appropriate Utilization Plan forms and/or Demonstration of Good Faith efforts checklist with their responses. The directory of BEP certified vendors can be found at the following website (<https://cms.diversitycompliance.com/>).

B.26 Freedom of Information Act
Harper College is a public body and subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140/1 (FOIA). Any information submitted to Harper College by the respondent/bidder is subject to disclosure to third parties in accordance with FOIA.

If the respondent/bidder intends for Harper College to withhold trade secrets, commercial information or financial information from disclosure to a third party in response to a FOIA request, **the respondent/bidder must specifically mark information that is proprietary, privileged or confidential and would cause competitive harm if released at the time of the proposal/bid is submitted to Harper College.** 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(g). Any content not so marked by the bidder/respondent at the time of the proposal/bid submission will be presumed to be open to public inspection. The respondent/bidder may be required to substantiate the basis for its claims at a later time.

Notwithstanding timely notice received from a respondent/bidder, Harper College reserves the right, in its sole discretion and subject only to applicable law, to withhold or release the subject information in response to a FOIA request.

It is unacceptable for a proposal/bid to be marked proprietary, privileged and/or confidential in its entirety. A proposal/bid marked as such may be deemed non-responsive by Harper College.

B.27 Guarantees and Warranties:
All guarantees and warranties required shall be furnished by the Consultant and shall be delivered to the Purchasing Department before final voucher on the contract is issued.

C. PROPOSALS (RFP Response)-FORM AND CONTENT

C.01 Submission of Proposals:

C.01.1 To be considered, Proposals must be delivered directly to the Harper College Purchasing Department on or before the date and time specified in the Request for Proposals. Delivery methods are solely the responsibility of the respondent.

C.01.2 Each Respondent shall submit the number of Proposals as enumerated on the cover page herein, one of which shall be the original.

C.01.3 Proposals (RFP Response) may be submitted in a sealed envelope, addressed as follows:

William Rainey Harper College
Purchasing Department
Building A, Room A217
1200 W. Algonquin Road
Palatine, Illinois 60067-7398

Late Proposals (RFP Responses) are grounds for rejection at the owner's discretion.

C.02 CHANGES and INVOICING

C.02.1 Changes in Scope

Unless otherwise agreed by the Board of Trustees in the original contract for professional services, any change in scope of services that increase the agreed contract price for professional services and/or for costs to be expended by the professional in an amount in excess of \$25,000 must be approved by the Board of Trustees. Any change in the scope of services that increase the agreed contract price for professional services and/or for costs to be expended by the professional in the amount of \$25,000 or less, may be approved by the College President or his designee.

C.02.2 Invoicing Requirements

Unless otherwise agreed by the Board of Trustees in the original contract for professional services, all invoices for professional services rendered must be itemized by the name of the individual doing the work, the date of the work, the time expended by the individual broken down into 10ths of an hour, with a description of the work. In addition, all costs must be itemized with a description of the purpose for which the cost was incurred. Unless otherwise agreed by the Board of Trustees in the original contract for professional services, fee and cost invoices must be provided to the College on a monthly basis.

C.02.3 Termination for Default

The College reserves the right to terminate the whole or any part of this contract, upon written notice to the bidder, in the event of default by the bidder. Default is defined as failure by the bidder to perform any provisions of this contract or failure to make sufficient progress so as to endanger performance of this contract in accordance with its terms. In the event of default and termination, the College may procure, upon such terms and in a manner as the Purchasing Department may deem appropriate, supplies or services similar to those so terminated. The bidder shall be liable for any excess cost for such similar supplies or services unless acceptable evidence is submitted to the Purchasing Department that failure to perform the contract was due to causes beyond the control and without the fault or negligence of the bidder.

C.02.4 Termination for Convenience

The College may terminate this contract at any time upon a written notice to the bidder, should it be determined that these services are no longer required, or if sufficient funds are not available to cover the estimated requirement, or for any other reason in the College's sole and exclusive discretion. Payment for work performed prior to the effective date of termination shall be based upon an estimate of the services actually performed, and shall be mutually agreed upon by the College and the bidder. Such payment so made to the bidder shall be in full settlement for services rendered under this contract.

C.02.5 Conflict of Interest

It shall be a breach of ethical standards for any employee of the College to participate directly or indirectly in procurement when the employee knows that:

1. The employee has financial interest pertaining to the procurement.
2. A business or organization in which the employee has a financial interest pertaining to the procurement is involved in the procurement.
3. Any other person, business, or organization with which the employee is negotiating or has an arrangement concerning prospective employment is involved in the procurement.

Employees who violate this standard will be subject to discipline in accordance with applicable State, County and local codes. Upon discovery of an actual or potential conflict of interest, an employee shall promptly disqualify themselves and withdraw from further participation in the transaction involved.

C.03 Form of Proposals:

All Vendors are required to follow the format as specified below. The proposal should be concise, well-organized, and clearly demonstrate the Vendor's qualifications and experience as described below.

Section 1: Executive Summary

Provide an executive summary that summarizes the proposal including implementation services. At a high level, provide an implementation plan. Identify any third-party applications which will be required to meet our objectives.

Section 2: Vendor Profile

Provide the following information:

- Name of vendor
- Vendor's mailing address, telephone number, FAX number, and web site address
- Vendor's primary contact person who authorized signatory information
- Primary contact person's title, mailing address, telephone number(s), FAX number, and email address
- Brief overview of the vendor's company, products, and services

Section 3: Vendor's Understanding of the RFP

- Provide a statement that acknowledges the vendor's understanding of the "Procurement Process," as presented in the RFP.
- Provide a statement that acknowledges the vendor's understanding of the "RFP Instructions and Requirements," as presented in the RFP.

Section 4: Proposed Software Products

- Identify all application software that is proposed or required.
- Identify all database technologies and/or file management systems that are proposed or required
- Identify all required ancillary software (e.g., middleware, compilers, and report writers) that William Rainey Harper College should consider.
- Identify all optional ancillary software (e.g., middleware, compilers, and report writers) that William Rainey Harper College should consider.
- Summarize the features, functionality, and characteristics associated with each software product.

Section 5: Supplementary and General Technical Questions

Provide a response to each of the items within the “Supplementary and General Technical Questions” section of the RFP.

Section 6: Detailed System Requirements and Availability Checklist

Provide a response to each of the items within the “Attachment A and B Checklist” section of the RFP.

Section 7: Additional Services

- Describe all additional services (e.g., remote technical support) that are required, recommended, and available or provided for each proposed product.
- Provide information about the internal staffing requirements that William Rainey Harper College will encounter with the proposed system.
- Provide information about national, regional, and state specific Users Groups that are supported by your company. Include contact information for Officers of those Users Groups.

Section 8: Software Maintenance and Enhancements

- Describe the benefits, impacts, and schedules of new releases and modules. State the circumstances under which such releases are mandatory or optional.
- Describe the procedures, both during and after the warranty period, for obtaining product support.
- Explain how custom modifications can be made by the vendor and/or William Rainey Harper College. In addition, describe the alternative mechanisms for maintaining such modifications over time.

Section 9: Vendor’s Corporate Strength

Describe the vendor’s corporate history, market segment(s), client base, employee base, research and development programs, and financial well-being.

Section 10: Optional Products and Services

Describe, in detail, all optional products and services. Vendors are hereby advised that William Rainey Harper College may want to procure an optional item but might not be able to do so if it is not formally declared in this section. Optional products might include query tools, workflow systems, IVR solutions, utilities, documentation, training materials, etc.

Section 11: Client References

Provide a response to each of the items within the "References for Harper College" section of the RFP.

Section 12: Additional Information

Provide any additional information that William Rainey Harper College should consider in its evaluation of proposals. This would include a list of whether your company is currently involved in litigation with any of your clients. Do not provide marketing brochures or generic information that does not meet your specific solution to this Request for Proposal.

Section 13: Acknowledgement of Addenda

Provide attached proposal form that acknowledges understanding and compliance with RFP conditions and acknowledges the issuance and receipt of any RFP addenda, if applicable.

Section 14: Pricing Proposals

Provide pricing proposal and **submit in a separate sealed & marked envelope.**

STATEMENT OF WORK

COLLEGE BACKGROUND

William Rainey Harper College is one of forty-eight (48) community colleges in the State of Illinois that make up the Illinois Community College System. The College is a two-year public community college located in the northwest suburbs of Chicago and serves 23 communities. The 200-acre campus is located in Palatine, with extension facilities at the Learning and Career Center in Prospect Heights. In addition, Harper provides educational services in partnership with Elgin Community College at the Education and Work Center in Hanover Park. Further information about Harper College can be found on its website.

Harper College's credit full-time equivalent (FTE) including vocational education (Continuing Professional Education) in fiscal year 2021-22 was 8,043 which represents 21,370 full-time and part-time students; non-credit community education classes served an additional 7,935 students. In addition, the College supports the community through ancillary services and programs such as the arts, theatre, wellness, and programs for people of all ages from the child-care preschool to Lifelong Learning Institute for 50+.

Harper is dedicated to student success and is committed to its mission of enriching its diverse communities by providing quality, affordable, and accessible education. Harper College, in collaboration with its partners, inspires the transformation of individual lives, the workforce, and society. Harper College awards seven Associate degrees, provides numerous transfer options, and offers a large number of certificate programs to meet specific needs of the community and area industry.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

William Rainey Harper College (Harper College) is issuing the Request for Proposals (RFP) to contract with a single organization to provide a unified platform for 1) collecting and processing search engine analytics; 2) providing recommendations for improving Harper College's performance in search and 3) collecting and processing data on the efficacy of the recommended optimizations. This will be referenced as the solution in this RFP. It is the intent of this RFP to solicit proposals from all interested organizations possessing expertise to provide a solution to accommodate the needs of Harper College, within the guidelines established in this RFP.

A. Project Details

Harper College requires a search engine optimization (SEO) platform to help improve the performance of the Website (www.harpercollege.edu) in Google Search and other search engines. The platform must automatically collect, aggregate and report search engine performance data on the Website, its 5000+ pages, and its competitors. The SEO solution must also report page-specific content and technical recommendations to improve ranking in search engines. The platform must also track whether its recommendations have been implemented and report on the success of those recommendations. The solution must be easy enough for non-SEO experts—particularly student workers—to use and comprehend.

B. Required Tasks and Services

Harper College is looking for a comprehensive SEO platform. The College is seeking an organization to provide a solution that will meet all the following requirements.

Describe and demonstrate how the product will meet the requirements below:

1. Provide data and analysis on Harper's actual search presence and performance, such as search engine results pages (SERPs), ranking, changes over time, and best practices.
2. Provide content optimization recommendations that adhere to industry best practices for achieving high search ranking. Recommendations will meet WCAG recommendations for digital accessibility.
3. Perform competitive analysis and report on the strategies competitors use to achieve high ranking in search engines.
4. Filter data and insights by a variety of factors, including by timeframe, geolocation, individual page performance or overall performance of groups of pages.
5. Provide data and insights on Harper's search performance for 1) the group of Illinois communities that comprise our target market, which includes Arlington Heights, Barrington, Barrington Hills, Buffalo Grove, Carpentersville, Deer Park, Des Plaines, Elk Grove Village, Fox River Grove, Hanover Park, Hoffman Estates, Inverness, Lake Barrington, Mount Prospect, North Barrington, Palatine, Port Barrington, Prospect Heights, Rolling Meadows, Roselle, Schaumburg, South Barrington, Tower Lakes, Wheeling and 2) our secondary market, which includes the greater Chicago area.
6. Ingest, utilize, and report available data from Harper accounts in Google Analytics, Google Search Console, Google Ads, etc,
7. Provide success tracking and return on investment information over time. Provide comparisons of organic search vs. paid search performance and identify cost savings or generate suggestions for shifting investment dollars.
8. Provide information demonstrating the effect of optimizations on key goals throughout the Website, including clicks on requests for information, apply now, and info session RSVPs, as well as other key performance indicators, such as new users.
9. Track the success of optimizations made by specific users, showing the impact that user made on Harper's search presence.
10. Create reports and dashboards for daily monitoring and management, as well as reporting to leadership.
11. Export data or reports as CSV or to other applications, such as Google Data Studio.
12. Provide training and support for end users of the product.

SUPPLEMENTARY AND GENERAL TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

A. Supplementary Questions

The following items are important with respect to the evaluation of proposals. Applicants should provide clear and detailed responses to each item.

1. Provide a detailed implementation plan, including a timeline, for the project and solution.
 - a) Identify all third parties that will be required to provide services and necessary to complete the project and the role they will play in completing this project.
 - b) Describe the typical timeframe and significant milestones for completion of the project and service delivery.
 - c) All aspects of the project necessary to deliver the solution should be fully articulated and included in any cost estimates. This includes any third-party engagements, should they be required.
2. Describe your process for correcting discrepancies between contractual requirements and delivered solutions should they arise.
3. Describe your process for responding to changes or additional requirements during the course of the project.
4. Does the Applicant partner with any of the vendors listed in the Current Vendors section (appendix)? If so, please describe the partnership.
5. What is expected from Harper College to successfully design and build the solution? Identify resources that Harper will need to provide.
6. Describe the training that will take place for various solution components for Harper College personnel.
7. Organization and personnel requirements - The selected organization must have at least three (3) years of experience supplying search engine optimization platforms. Applicants should include any credentials from any certifying organization that attest to the capabilities of the organization or of any of the individuals employed by the organization that will be working on the proposed project.

B. General Technical Questions:

1. Describe how the solution collects its data and generates its insights.
2. Describe any account limitations or caps on what data is collected, how much data is collected, how long it is retained and available within the system.
3. Describe the level of customer support available for end users and how they would access customer support.
4. Describe what out-of-box analytics are available in the solution and their applicability to higher education.
5. Describe how your product integrates with and uses data from Harper's Google Analytics 4, Google Search Console and Google Ads accounts.
6. Describe any other data sources used by your software and how they are used within the system.
7. Describe how long data collected within your solution is available for.
8. Describe any caps or limitations on the amount of data collected.

9. Describe any caps or limitations on the number of URLs or domains where data will be collected.
10. Describe any caps or limitations on the number of keywords that can be tracked within the solution.
11. Describe any limitations or caps on the number of custom reports or reports generated on the fly.
12. Describe any limitations or caps on the number of competitors tracked within the solution.
13. Describe any add-ons available for your system.
14. Describe any future releases and what additional functionality will be available with those releases.
15. Describe your solution's development roadmap.
16. How many user licenses come with each product package or tier?
17. How are user roles assigned for tasks?
18. What tasks can or can't do for each assigned role perform?
19. Describe how each user's optimization activity is tracked within the system, and how that activity is matched to success.
20. Describe the standards used to ensure the recommendations generated by your solution follow best practices.

ATTACHMENT A
Harper College
System Requirements and Availability Checklist

NOTE: All questions which require a yes or no response in the “Available” column must have the applicable code in the “Approach” column. The Approach codes are:

- B** Required functionality is met by the base package software
- M** Required functionality is met by modifying the base package software
- C** Required functionality is met through custom development
- T** Required functionality cannot be met by the Vendor’s application, but a third-party vendor has provided the requirement in the past. Identify the third-party vendor in the Comments column.

If your response requires clarification provide details in the “Comments” column. Use additional sheets if needed. Compliance to this section represents a significant portion of the evaluation.

#	Required Functionality	Available (Yes/No)	Approach (B/M/C/T)	Comments (Attach sheet if needed)
Documentation and Support				
A-1	Do you have a knowledge base or help documentation available on your website or through the application?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
A-2	Do you have training materials or modules available on your website or through the application?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
A-3	Do you have a user community?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
A-4	Do you have a suggestion portal?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
A-5	Describe any webinars, certifications, or other professional development opportunities available to end users.			
User Accounts				
A-6	Does your solution support single sign-on (SSO) protocols for user and administrator authentication? Please list the SSO standards you support.	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Content Compliance				
A-7	Do the recommendations generated by your solution follow WCAG 2.2 Web Accessibility Guidelines?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		

Additional functionality that the vendor’s software provides that may be useful to Harper should be listed on separate sheet.

**Attachment B
Harper College
Technical and Security Systems Evaluation Questions**

Please respond to the applicable questions and provide narrative in the response section as applicable.:

#	Technical Functionality	Available (Yes/No)	Response
Company Overview			
B-1	Have you had an unplanned disruption to this product/service in the last 12 months?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
B-2	Will Harper data be shared with or hosted by any third parties? (e.g. any entity not wholly owned by your company is considered a third-party)	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
B-3	Use this area to share information about your environment that will assist those who are assessing your company data security program.		
B-4	Do you have a mobile app, or is your browser-based application optimized for use on a mobile device?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
B-5	Will Harper's data be available within the system for a period of time at the completion of this contract?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
B-6	Can Harper extract a full or partial backup of data?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
B-7	Are ownership rights to all data, inputs, outputs retained by the College?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
B-8	Are these rights retained even through a provider acquisition or bankruptcy event?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix

Vendors

The following table lists vendors or web applications that Harper uses to manage its web presence. For each, please describe any relationship or integration with between your companies or their products.

Service/Application	Description	Integration / Relationship
Concept3D	Harper's map and calendar solution provider	
Formstack	Web based form provider	
Google	Analytics and reporting provider (Google Analytics 4, Google Search Console, Google Ads, Google Data Studio)	
Jasper.ai	Artificial intelligence content generation platform	
Modern Campus	Provider of Omni CMS and Destiny, Harper's primary content management systems. Also provides Omni Search (site search)	
Monsido	Quality improvement tracking platform	
MoreVisibility	Harper's digital marketing agency	
Salesforce/Target X	CRM; Admissions.	

Recent Higher Education Market References

Per C.03.1 of General Information, list below current business references for whom you have performed work similar to that required by this proposal.

Provide at least three (3) references, of which a minimum of two (2) should be in higher education (preferably community colleges) for projects similar in size and scope to the project being proposed demonstrating successful delivery of a similar or related solution to the proposal.

Provide a list of all higher education clients upon request by the College.

Organization #1:

Organization Name:	
Contact Name:	
Title:	
Contact Address:	
Phone:	
Years as Customer/Client:	
Estimated Contract Value	
DBMS Environment:	
CPU Type and Application Software:	
Is Software implemented and in production:	
Project Status	

Organization #2:

Organization Name:	
Contact Name:	
Title:	
Contact Address:	
Phone:	
Years as Customer/Client:	
Estimated Contract Value	
DBMS Environment:	
CPU Type and Application Software:	
Is Software implemented and in production:	
Project Status	

Organization #3:

Organization Name:	
Contact Name:	
Title:	
Contact Address:	
Phone:	
Years as Customer/Client:	
Estimated Contract Value	
DBMS Environment:	
CPU Type and Application Software:	
Is Software implemented and in production:	
Project Status	

FORM OF PROPOSAL

RETURN THIS PAGE ALONG WITH YOUR PROPOSAL

TO: Harper College
1200 W. Algonquin Road
Palatine, IL 60067
Attn: Purchasing Department

FROM:

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Facsimile Number: _____

AUTHORIZED NEGOTIATORS:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

RECEIPT OF ADDENDA: The receipt of the following addenda is hereby acknowledged:

Addendum No. _____, Dated _____

Addendum No. _____, Dated _____

FORM OF PROPOSAL (PAGE TWO)

BUSINESS ORGANIZATION:

_____ Sole Proprietor: An individual whose signature is affixed.
_____ Partnership: State full names, titles and addresses of all responsible principals and/or partners on attached sheet.
_____ Corporation: State of Incorporation: _____
Please provide your Federal Employer Identification Number (F.E.I.N.):

Seal (affix seal below if applicable)

(List Name of Officers)

President	_____
Vice-President	_____
Secretary	_____
Treasurer	_____

Attest:

Signature of Secretary

Q01132 Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Platform Solution Pricing Proposal

RETURN THIS PAGE IN A SEPARATE ENVELOPE MARKED "PRICING"
(If submitting electronically, submit as a separate file.)

TO: Harper College
1200 W. Algonquin Road
Palatine, IL 60067
Attn: Purchasing Department

FROM: Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Facsimile Number: _____

In compliance with this Request for Proposal, and subject to all conditions thereof, the undersigned offers and agrees, if this proposal is accepted, to furnish the services as outlined herein, to provide the services as enumerated within the "Specification" or "Statement of Work" herein for the Harper College in the amount indicated, subject to modification through negotiations which may be conducted pursuant to conditions set forth in the Request for Proposals.

The undersigned hereby certifies that they have read and understand the contents of this solicitation and agree to furnish at the prices shown any or all of the items above, subject to all instructions, conditions, specifications and attachments hereto. Failure to have read all the provisions of this solicitation shall not be cause to alter any resulting contract or to accept any request for additional compensation. By signing this proposal document, the proposer hereby certifies that they are not barred from bidding on this contract as a result of a violation of either Section 33E-3 or 33E-4 of the Illinois Criminal Code of 1961 and of 2012, as amended.

It is the intent of William Rainey Harper College to pay for services as they are delivered. Services shall be considered delivered when they are deemed fully functional by Harper College. All pricing should reflect recommended services for this project, with William Rainey Harper College paying for services as milestones are completed, delivered, and signed off on by Harper College.

Please declare all assumptions that were made with respect to proposed pricing including information the basis for calculating prices such as FTE enrollment, employee count, seat license restrictions, concurrent vs. name users, Operating Budget, remote vs. locally hosted application.

RECEIPT OF ADDENDA: The receipt of the following addenda is hereby acknowledged:

Addendum No. _____, Dated _____

Addendum No. _____, Dated _____

Proposed Pricing for Software, Training, and Implementation Services				
	Year 1	Year 2 (Optional Renewal)	Year 3 (Optional Renewal)	Year 4 (Optional Renewal)
Initial Cost "One-Time" Implementation	\$	\$	\$	\$
Number(s) of Domains				
Number(s) of User				
Monthly SEO Platform / Licensing	\$	\$	\$	\$
Monthly Retainer	\$	\$	\$	\$
Training and support	\$	\$	\$	\$
Annual Maintenance	\$	\$	\$	\$
List any additional cost that has not listed in the above				
Other	\$	\$	\$	\$
Other				
Other				

Proposed Pricing for Software, Training, and Implementation Services

	Year 1	Year 2 (Optional Renewal)	Year 3 (Optional Renewal)	Year 4 (Optional Renewal)
Total Not to Exceed Cost	\$	\$	\$	\$

Include additional explanation of costs and list assumptions that could influence the cost of licensing and maintenance pricing

List explanations and assumptions here:

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In submitting these Proposals, it is understood that Harper College reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals, to accept an alternate Proposals, and to waive any informalities in any Proposals.

AUTHORIZED NEGOTIATORS:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

In addition to this document, Respondents shall furnish, with the Proposals, all submittals as required herein.

BUSINESS ORGANIZATION:

_____ Sole Proprietor: An individual whose signature is affixed.

_____ Partnership: State full names, titles and addresses of all responsible principals and/or partners on attached sheet.

_____ Corporation: State of Incorporation: _____

Please provide your Federal Employer Identification Number (F.E.I.N.): _____

Seal (affix seal below if applicable)

(List Name of Officers)

President	_____
Vice-President	_____
Secretary	_____
Treasurer	_____

Attest:

Signature of Secretary

Respondent's Name: _____

Signature: _____

CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE

THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY CERTIFIES AS FOLLOWS:

1. That the undersigned has authority to make this certification on behalf of the bidder.

Name of Company

2. That the undersigned has read the contents, in regard to disqualification of certain bidders, which are contained on the following pages of the bid documents.
3. That the undersigned knows of his own knowledge that the bidder is not disqualified from bidding under the aforesaid sections.

Authorized Signature

Type or Print Name

Title

SEAL

Instructions: This is to be completely filled out and executed by the chief officer or the bidder authorized to submit the

certification.

DISQUALIFICATION OF CERTAIN BIDDERS

PERSONS AND ENTITIES SUBJECT TO DISQUALIFICATION

No person or business entity shall be awarded a contract or subcontract, for a stated period of time, from the date of conviction or entry of a plea or admission of guilt, if the person or business entity,

- (A) has been convicted of an act committed, within the State of Illinois or any state within the United States, of bribery or attempting to bribe an officer or employee in the State of Illinois, or any state in the United States in that officer's or employee's official capacity;
- (B) has been convicted of an act committed, within the State of Illinois or any state within the United States, of bid rigging or attempting to rig bids as defined in the Sherman Antitrust Act and Clayton Act 15 U.S.C.;
- (C) has been convicted of bid rigging or attempting to rig bids under the laws of the State of Illinois, or any state in the United States;
- (D) has been convicted of an act committed, within the State of Illinois or any state in the United States, of price-fixing or attempting to fix prices as defined by the Sherman Antitrust Act and Clayton Act 15 U.S.C. Sec. 1 et sig.;
- (E) has been convicted of price-fixing or attempting to fix prices under the laws of the State of Illinois, or any state in the United States;
- (F) has been convicted of defrauding or attempting to defraud any unit of state or local government or school district within the State of Illinois or in any state in the United States;
- (G) has made an admission of guilt of such conduct as set forth in subsection (A) through (F) above which admission is a matter of record, whether or not such person or business entity was subject to prosecution for the offense or offenses admitted to;
- (H) has entered a plea of nolo contendere to charges of bribery, price fixing, bid rigging, bid rotating, or fraud; as set forth in subparagraphs (A) through (F) above.

Business entity, as used herein, means a corporation, partnership, trust, association, unincorporated business or individually owned business.

HARPER COLLEGE, ILLINOIS
ANTI-COLLUSION AFFIDAVIT AND CONSULTANT'S CERTIFICATION

_____, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:
that he/she is _____ of
_____.
(Partner, Officer, Owner, Etc.)

The party making the foregoing proposal or bid, that such bid is genuine and not collusive, or sham; that said bidder has not colluded, conspired, connived or agreed, directly or indirectly, with any bidder or person, to put in a sham bid or to refrain from bidding, and has not in any manner, directly or indirectly, sought by agreement or collusion, or communication or conference with any person; to fix the bid price element of said bid, or of that of any other bidder, or to secure any advantage against any other bidder or any person interested in the proposed contract.

The undersigned certifies that he/she is not barred from bidding on this contract as a result of a conviction for the violation of State laws prohibiting bid-rigging or bid-rotating.

(Name of Proposer if the Proposer is an Individual)
(Name of Partner if the Proposer is a Partnership)
(Name of Officer if the Proposer is a Corporation)

The above statements must be subscribed and sworn to before a notary public.

Subscribed and Sworn to this _____ day of _____, 20____

SEAL

Failure to complete and return this form may be considered sufficient reason for rejection of the proposal.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM

_____, hereby certifies that it has conducted an investigation into whether an actual or potential conflict of interest exists between the proposer, its owners and employees, and any official or employee of William Rainey Harper College.

Proposer further certifies that it has disclosed any such actual or potential conflict of interest and acknowledges if Proposer has not disclosed any actual or potential conflict of interest, William Rainey Harper College may disqualify the proposal.

(Name of Proposer if the Proposer is an Individual)
(Name of Partner if the Proposer is a Partnership)
(Name of Officer if the Proposer is a Corporation)

The above statements must be subscribed and sworn to before a notary public. Subscribed and Sworn to this ____ day of _____, 20__

Notary Public

Failure to complete and return this form may be considered sufficient reason for rejection of the proposal.

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM
MINORITIES, FEMALES, PERSONS WITH DISABILITY
PARTICIPATION AND UTILIZATION PLAN**

The Business Enterprise for Minorities, Females and Persons with Disabilities Act (BEP) establishes a goal for community colleges contracting with businesses that have been certified as owned and controlled by persons who are minorities (MBE), female (FBE/ also referred to as WBE), or persons with disabilities (DBE) (collectively, BEP certified vendor(s)). 30 ILCS 575

Contract Goal to be Achieved by Vendor: This solicitation includes a specific **BEP** participation goal of 30% of the total dollar amount awarded to MBEs and FBEs, with at least 50% of the total dollar amount awarded to FBEs.

The BEP participation goal is applicable to all bids or offers. In addition to the award criteria established for this solicitation, the College will award this Contract to a Vendor that meets the goal or demonstrates good faith efforts to meet the goal. This goal is applicable to change orders and allowances within the scope of work provided by the BEP certified vendors. If Vendor is an MBE and FBE certified vendor, the entire goal is met and no subcontracting with a BEP certified vendors is required; however, **Vendor must submit a Utilization Plan indicating that the goal will be met by self-performance.**

Following are guidelines for Vendor's completion of the Utilization Plan. The Utilization Plan must demonstrate that Vendor has either: (1) met the entire contract goal; or (2) made good faith efforts towards meeting the goal.

At the time of bid or offer, Vendor, or Vendor's proposed Subcontractor, must be certified with the Illinois Department of Central Management Services as a BEP certified vendor.

Failure to complete a Utilization Plan or provide Good Faith Effort documentation shall render the bid or offer non-responsive; and subject to rejection and/or disqualification in the College's sole discretion.

1. If applicable where there is more than one prime vendor, the Utilization Plan should include an executed Joint Venture Agreement specifying the terms and conditions of the relationship between the parties and their relationship and responsibilities to the contract. The Joint Venture Agreement must clearly evidence that the BEP certified vendor will be responsible for a clearly defined portion of the work and that its responsibilities, risks, profits and contributions of capital, and personnel are proportionate to its ownership percentage. It must include specific details related to the parties' contributions of capital, personnel, and equipment and share of the costs of insurance and other items; the scopes to be performed by the BEP certified vendor under its supervision; and the commitment of management, supervisory personnel, and operative personnel employed by the BEP certified vendor to be dedicated to the performance of the contract. Established Joint Venture Agreements will only be credited toward BEP goal achievements for specific work performed by the BEP certified vendor. **Each party to the Joint Venture Agreement must execute the bid or offer prior to submission of the bid or offer to the College.**
2. An agreement between a vendor and a BEP certified vendor in which a BEP certified vendor promises not to provide subcontracting or pricing quotations to other vendors is prohibited. The College may request additional information to demonstrate compliance. Vendor agrees to cooperate promptly with the College in submitting to interviews, allowing entry to places of business, providing further documentation, and to soliciting the cooperation of a proposed BEP certified vendor. Failure to cooperate by Vendor and BEP certified vendor may render the bidder or offeror non-responsive or not responsible. **The contract not be awarded to Vendor unless Vendor's Utilization Plan is approved by the College.**

3. **BEP Certified Vendor Locator References:** Vendor may consult CMS' BEP Vendor Directory at www.sell2.illinois.gov/cms/business, as well as the directories of other certifying agencies, but firms **must be certified with CMS as BEP certified vendors at the time of bid or offer.**
4. **Vendor Assurance:** Vendor shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation or sex in the performance of this contract. Failure by Vendor to carry out these requirements is a material breach of this contract, which may result in the termination of this Project or such other remedy, as the College deems appropriate. This assurance must be included in each subcontract that Vendor signs with a subcontractor or supplier.
5. **Calculating BEP Certified Vendor Participation:** The Utilization Plan documents work anticipated to be performed, or goods/equipment provided by all BEP certified vendors and paid for upon satisfactory completion/delivery. Only the value of payments made for the work actually performed by BEP certified vendors, by subcontractors or suppliers to such vendors, is counted toward the contract goal. Applicable guidelines for counting payments attributable to contract goals are summarized below:
 - 5.1 The value of the work actually performed, or goods/equipment provided by the BEP certified vendor shall be counted towards the goal. The entire amount of that portion of the contract that is performed by the BEP certified vendor, including supplies purchased or equipment leased by the BEP certified vendor shall be counted, except supplies purchased and equipment rented from the Prime Vendor submitting this bid or offer.
 - 5.2 A vendor shall count the portion of the total dollar value of the BEP contract equal to the distinct, clearly defined portion of the work of the contract that the BEP certified vendor performs toward the goal. A vendor shall also count the dollar value of work subcontracted to other BEP certified vendor. Work performed by the non- BEP certified party shall not be counted toward the goal. **Work that a BEP certified vendor subcontracts to a non-BEP certified vendor will not count towards the goal.**
 - 5.3 A Vendor shall count toward the goal 100% of its expenditures for materials and supplies required under the contract and obtained from a BEP certified vendor manufacturer, BEP certified regular dealer, or BEP certified supplier. A Vendor shall count toward the goal the following expenditures to BEP certified vendors that are not manufacturers, regular dealers, or suppliers:
 - 5.3.1 The fees or commissions charged for providing a bona fide service, such as professional, technical, consultant or managerial services and assistance in the procurement of essential personnel, facilities, equipment, materials or supplies required for performance of the contract, provided that the fee or commission is determined by College to be reasonable and not excessive as compared with fees customarily allowed for similar services.
 - 5.3.2 The fees charged for delivery of materials and supplies required by the Project (but not the cost of the materials and supplies themselves) when the hauler, trucker, or delivery service is not also the manufacturer or a supplier of the materials and supplies being procured, provided that the fee is determined by the College to be reasonable and not excessive as compared with fees customarily allowed for similar services. The BEP certified vendor's trucking firm must be responsible for the management and supervision of the entire trucking operation for which it is responsible on the contract and must itself own and operate at least one fully

licensed, insured and operational truck used on the contract.

5.3.3 The fees or commissions charged for providing any bonds or insurance specifically required for the performance of the contract, provided that the fee or commission is determined by the College to be reasonable and not excessive as compared with fees customarily allowed for similar services.

5.4 BEP certified vendors who are performing on contract as second tier subcontractors may be counted in meeting the established BEP goal for this contract as long as the Prime Vendor can provide documentation indicating the utilization of these vendors.

5.5 A Vendor shall count towards the goal only expenditures to firms that perform a commercially useful function in the work of the contract.

5.5.1 A firm is considered to perform a commercially useful function when it is responsible for execution of a distinct element of the work of a contract and carries out its responsibilities by actually performing, managing, and supervising the work involved. The BEP certified vendor must also be responsible, with respect to materials or supplies used on the contract, for negotiating price, determining quality and quantity, ordering the materials or supplies, and installing the materials (where applicable) and paying for the material or supplies. To determine whether a firm is performing a commercially useful function, the College shall evaluate the amount of work subcontracted, whether the amount the firm is to be paid under the contract is commensurate with the work it is actually performing, and the credit claimed for its performance of the work, industry practices, and other relevant factors.

5.5.2 A BEP certified vendor does not perform a commercially useful function if its role is limited to that of an extra participant in a transaction or contract through which funds are passed through in order to obtain BEP certified vendor participation. In determining whether a BEP certified vendor is such an extra participant, the College shall examine similar transactions, particularly those in which BEP certified vendors do not participate, and industry practices.

5.6 A Vendor shall not count towards the goal expenditures that are not direct, necessary and related to the work of the contract. Only the amount of services or goods that are directly attributable to the performance of the contract shall be counted. Ineligible expenditures include general office overhead or other Vendor support activities.

6. Good Faith Effort Procedures: Vendor must submit Utilization Plans, subcontract documents, and/or Letters of Intent that meet or exceed the published goal. If Vendor cannot meet the stated goal, Vendor must document and explain within the Utilization Plan the good faith efforts it undertook to meet the goal. Utilization Plans are due at the time of and must be enclosed and sealed with the bid or offer submission. Copies of subcontract documents and/or Letters of Intent shall be due upon request.

7. Contract Compliance: Compliance with this section is an essential part of the contract. The following administrative procedures and remedies govern Vendor's compliance with the contractual obligations established by the Utilization Plan. **After approval of the Plan and award of the contract, the Utilization Plan becomes part of the contract.** If Vendor did not succeed in obtaining BEP certified vendor participation to achieve the goal and the Utilization Plan was approved and contract awarded based upon a determination of good faith, the total dollar value of BEP certified vendor work calculated

in the approved Utilization Plan as a percentage of the awarded contract value shall become the contract goal.

- 7.1. The Utilization Plan may not be amended after contract execution without the College's prior written approval.
- 7.2. **Vendor may not make changes to its contractual BEP certified vendor commitments or substitute BEP certified vendors without the prior written approval of the College.** Unauthorized changes or substitutions, including performing the work designated for a BEP certified vendor with Vendor's own forces, shall be a violation of the utilization plan and a breach of the contract, and shall be cause to terminate the contract, and/or seek other contract remedies or sanctions.
- 7.3. If it becomes necessary to substitute a BEP certified vendor or otherwise change the Utilization Plan, Vendor must notify the College in writing of the request to substitute a BEP certified vendor or otherwise change the Utilization Plan. The request must state specific reasons for the substitution or change. The College shall notify the Council or its delegate of the request to substitute a BEP certified vendor or change the Utilization Plan. The College reserves the right to approve or deny a request for substitution or other change in the Utilization Plan.
- 7.4. Where Vendor has established the basis for the substitution to the College's satisfaction, it must make good faith efforts to meet the contract goal by substituting a BEP certified vendor. Documentation of a replacement BEP certified vendor, or of good faith efforts to replace the BEP certified vendor, must meet the requirements of the initial Utilization Plan. If the goal cannot be reached and good faith efforts have been made, Vendor may substitute with a non- BEP certified vendor or Vendor may perform the work.
- 7.5. If a Vendor plans to hire a subcontractor for any scope of work that was not previously disclosed in the Utilization Plan, Vendor must obtain the approval of the College to modify the Utilization Plan and must make good faith efforts to ensure that BEP certified vendors have a fair opportunity to submit a bid or offer on the new scope of work.
- 7.6. A new BEP certified vendor agreement must be executed and submitted to the College within five business days of Vendor's receipt of the College's approval for the substitution or other change.
- 7.7. Vendor shall maintain a record of all relevant data with respect to the utilization of BEP certified vendors, including but without limitation, payroll records, invoices, canceled checks and books of account for a period of at least three years after the completion of the contract. Full access to these records shall be granted by Vendor upon 48 hours written demand by the College to any duly authorized representative thereof, or to any municipal, state or federal authorities. The College shall have the right to obtain from Vendor any additional data reasonably related or necessary to verify any representations by Vendor. After the performance of the final item of work or delivery of material by the BEP certified vendor and final payment to the BEP certified vendor by Vendor, but not later than 30 calendar days after such payment, Vendor shall submit a statement confirming the final payment and the total payments made to the BEP certified vendor under the contract.

- 7.8.** The College will periodically review Vendor's compliance with these provisions and the terms of its contract. Without limitation, Vendor's failure to comply with these provisions or its contractual commitments as contained in the Utilization Plan, failure to cooperate in providing information regarding its compliance with these provisions or its Utilization Plan, or provision of false or misleading information or statements concerning compliance, certification status or eligibility of the BEP certified vendor, good faith efforts or any other material fact or representation shall constitute a material breach of this contract and entitle the College to declare a default, terminate the contract, or exercise those remedies provided for in the Project or at law or in equity.
- 7.9.** The College reserves the right to withhold payment to Vendor to enforce these provisions and Vendor's contractual commitments. Final payment shall not be made pursuant to the contract until Vendor submits sufficient documentation demonstrating compliance with its Utilization Plan.

UTILIZATION PLAN

The Utilization Plan and Letter of Intent must be sealed and submitted with bid.

(Vendor) submits the following Utilization Plan as part of our bid or offer in accordance with the requirements of the BEP Program Status and Participation section of the solicitation for _____, Illinois

Reference Number Q_____. We understand that all subcontractors must be certified with the CMS BEP Program at the time of submission of all bids and offers. **We understand that compliance with this section is an essential part of this contract and that the Utilization Plan will become a part of the contract, if awarded.**

Vendor submits the following statement:

- Vendor is a BEP certified firm and plans to fully meet the goal through self-performance.
- Vendor has identified BEP certified subcontractor(s) to fully meet the established goal and submits the attached executed Letter(s) of Intent; or
- Vendor has made good faith efforts towards meeting the entire goal as indicated on the attached Utilization Plan, or a portion of the goal, and hereby requests a waiver (complete checklist below).

Vendor's person responsible for compliance with this BEP goal:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Signature of authorized representative of bidder:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Notary: _____

DEMONSTRATION OF GOOD FAITH EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE GOAL AND REQUEST FOR WAIVER

If the BEP participation goal was not achieved, the vendor must provide documented evidence of good faith efforts to achieve the goal.

Below is a checklist of actions that will be used to evaluate a Vendor's Demonstration of Good Faith Efforts and Request for Waiver. **Please check the actions which you completed.** If any other efforts were made to obtain BEP participation in addition to the items listed below, attach a detailed description of such efforts. The College reserves the right to review and audit the results of the vendor's efforts as described below.

- Utilize the Sell2Illinois website: www2.illinois.gov/cms/business to identify BEP certified vendors within the respective commodity/service codes denoted above and at a minimum email all listed vendors and solicit quotes from all vendors who express an interest via follow-up emails or telephone calls.
- Solicit through all reasonable and available means (e.g., attendance at a vendor conference, advertising and/or written notices) the interest of BEP certified vendors that have the capability to perform the work of the contract. Vendor must solicit this interest within sufficient time to allow the BEP certified vendors to respond to the solicitation. Vendor must determine with certainty if the BEP certified vendors are interested by taking appropriate steps to follow up initial solicitations and encourage them to submit a bid or proposal. Vendor must provide interested BEP certified vendors with adequate information about the plans, specifications, and requirements of the contract in a timely manner to assist them in responding promptly to the solicitation.
- Select portions of the work to be performed by BEP certified vendors in order to increase the likelihood that the goal will be achieved. This includes, where appropriate, breaking out contract work items into economically feasible units to facilitate BEP certified vendor participation, even when Vendor might otherwise prefer to perform these work items with its own forces.
- Make a portion of the work available to BEP certified vendors and selecting those portions of the work or material needs consistent with their availability, so as to facilitate BEP certified vendor participation.
- Negotiate in good faith with interested BEP certified vendors. Evidence of such negotiation must include the names, addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of BEP certified vendors that were considered and an explanation as to why an agreement could not be reached.
- Thoroughly investigate the capabilities of BEP certified vendors and not reject them as unqualified without sound reasons.
- Make efforts to assist interested BEP certified vendors in obtaining lines of credit or insurance as required by the College.
- Make efforts to assist interested BEP certified vendors in obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or related assistance or services.

BEP Utilization Plan

The following firms will be utilized to meet the goals of the BEP Program

Name of Firm	Contract Value	Description of Work	% of Goal
Total			