



National Career Academy Coalition
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Website Redesign-Social Media Platform

PROPOSALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY EMAIL NO LATER THAN:
SEPTEMBER 28, 2012

EMAIL CONTACT
PAM DALY
DK BRAND STRATEGY
pdaly@dkbrand.com

NOTICE TO OFFERORS - SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR RFP INQUIRIES:
Pam Daly
PO Box 127
Brentwood TN 37024
615-403-6868
pdaly@dkbrand.com

The person designated above shall be the only contact for any and all inquiries regarding any aspect of this RFP or its requirements. To ensure the integrity of the RFP process, prospective service providers are advised not to contact anyone else.

PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE: None currently scheduled.

AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING: A contract resulting from this RFP shall only be issued subject to the availability of funding.

SCHEDULE FOR AWARD/TABLE OF CONTENTS

Schedule

Award Proposals Mailed/Advertised:.....Thursday, September 12 2012

Proposals Due:.....Friday, September 28, 2012

Contract Award (approx.):Friday, October 5, 2012

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Scope

The National Career Academy Coalition is soliciting proposals from qualified service providers to provide website redesign and social media services as described herein. To be considered, one (1) emailed copy of the proposal must be submitted by Friday, September 28th at 5:00 pm EST to pdaly@dkbrand.com.

Any inquiries concerning this Request for Proposal (RFP) should be addressed to Pam Daly, DK Brand Strategy at pdaly@dkbrand.com.

Basis of Award

Award will be made, pending availability of funding, to the responsive, responsible service provider whose proposal, conforming to the RFP requirements, receives the highest total number of evaluation points, price and other factors considered, as outlined herein.

It is anticipated that the Notice of Intent to Award will be issued on or about Friday October 5, 2012. It is expected that a contract will be executed between NCAC and the successful provider on or about Wednesday October 10, 2012, with work to begin immediately thereafter.

Pre-proposal Conference

No pre-proposal conference is currently scheduled. However, if NCAC determines that it would be in its best interests to have one, a pre-proposal conference may be scheduled and notice will be given to all interested parties.

Past Performance

Service providers must demonstrate satisfactory past performance. If a prospective service provider is unable to demonstrate satisfactory past performance of services similar to those specified herein, their proposal may be considered technically unacceptable and eliminated from further consideration.

Contract Type

The contract awarded as a result of this solicitation shall be a firm fixed price, professional services contract.

Term of Contract

Unless terminated in accordance the Services Contract General Provisions, the term of any contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall be from the date of award through project completion and all Contractor obligations have been completely fulfilled.

Modifications

The terms of the contract awarded as a result of this RFP may only be modified in writing, which shall be signed by duly authorized representatives of both the NCAC and the Contractor.

Contract Administrator

The Contract Administrator for any contract awarded as a result of this solicitation will be Jan Struebing, Executive Director, NCAC or her designee.

Contract Contents

The contents of this RFP and the contents of any proposal selected as a result of this RFP may be incorporated by reference into any Contract subsequently awarded.

Questions Received Prior to Opening of Proposals

All questions must be directed to the person designated on the RFP Cover Page as the single point of contact. There are generally two types of questions. One requires directing the questioner to the specific section of the RFP where the answer may be found. At the option of the NCAC, responses to these types of questions may be given verbally. Such questions and answers are entirely unofficial and in no case may such a verbal response to a question affect any aspect of this RFP process.

The second type of question involves clarifying or interpreting parts of the RFP or the intent of the RFP. While the NCAC has no obligation to respond to such questions, this type of question and any response shall be in writing. Any written responses conveying material information shall be provided to all known recipients of the original solicitation. If any verbal responses are given, or claimed to be given, no person may rely upon them and they will not affect any aspect of this RFP process.

Period for Acceptance of Proposals

The proposal shall remain valid for at least sixty (60) days after the closing date for receipt of proposals except as otherwise specified elsewhere in this solicitation.

Solicitation and Responsiveness of Offers

The solicitation requirements have been established to obtain full and accurate representation of responsiveness and responsibility which will enable the NCAC to evaluate proposals and award contracts for providing the services requested. The National Career Academy Coalition in its sole discretion will determine responsiveness and final evaluation results for this RFP as provided herein.

EVALUATION AND AWARD

1. GENERAL.

- a. NCAC intends to award a contract resulting from this RFP to the responsive, responsible provider whose proposal, conforming to the RFP requirements, receives the highest total number of evaluation points, price and other factors considered. The highest possible number of points attainable is 500, weighted 30% (150 points) for price and 70% (350 points) for technical qualifications.
- b. All proposals shall be subjected to an evaluation process consisting of a preliminary evaluation of administrative compliance followed by a secondary, technical evaluation of proposal content.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE EVALUATION.

- a. Proposals failing to comply with all administrative requirements may be declared non-responsive and given no further consideration.

3. TECHNICAL EVALUATION (70%).

- a. All proposals meeting the administrative requirements of the RFP will be forwarded to the evaluation committee. Proposals will then be subjected to technical evaluation using the following criteria.
 - i. **Technical Qualifications:** The Technical Qualifications portion is composed of three essential elements: Understanding of mandatory project requirements and ability to meet them; Ability to comply with highly desirable project requirements; and Past Performance/References. These include all of the evaluation factors that allow NCAC to get an in-depth view of the provider's overall technical ability to successfully execute a contract of this size and scope with quality and efficiency. The total weight of all technical qualification factors is 70% or 350 points.
 1. **Understanding of project requirements and proposed project approach and methodology. (150 Points / 30%)** This portion of the proposal will be evaluated in accordance with the project requirements listed herein. To facilitate proposal evaluation, providers must fully detail their solution to each of the project requirements. Providers demonstrating the most significant understanding and approach to the project shall receive the most points in this category. A minimum of 120 points must be attained in this area for an offer to be further considered for award.

- a. Candidate's understanding of intended audience and desired functionality for the NCAC website
 - b. Description of approach and process Candidate would take in the design, organization, and management of the project
 - c. Candidate's content strategies including staff training, content auditing, writing for the web, and search optimization
2. **Capacity to Perform. (100 Points / 20%)** This portion of the proposal will be evaluated in accordance with the project requirements listed herein. To facilitate proposal evaluation, providers must fully detail their qualifications/expertise, feasibility of proposed timeline, and ability to meet project requirements. Providers demonstrating the most significant ability to comply shall receive the most points in this category. A minimum of 80 points must be attained in this area for an offer to be further considered for award.
- a. Description of high-level, phased timeline with proposed staff qualifications
 - b. Candidate's design work examples exhibiting desired features outlined in the RFP
 - c. Descriptions of the unique expertise and design approach (apart from competitors) that Candidate would bring to this project
3. **Past Performance Information. (100 Points / 20%)** This portion of the proposal must include a listing of completed contracts similar in scope, in process or completed, which have been performed within the past three years. Contracts should include those entered into with Institutes of Higher Education, and may include those entered into with the Federal Government, agencies of state and local governments, and/or commercial customers. Contracts with customers with websites of similar size or larger and having similar structural functions are preferred. The providers past performance and references will determine the points applied in this category. A minimum of 80 points must be attained in this area for an offer to be further considered for award.
- a. Demonstrates a minimum of three years proven experience and knowledge in the field

- of web development and design generally
- b. Demonstrates the design and deployment of a website for a regionally accredited college, or other education oriented entity.
- c. Demonstrated reliability, effectiveness and customer satisfaction based on feedback received from client references

4. PRICE EVALUATION (30%).

- a. The provider must complete all required price information on the Rate Response Form. Failure to include any required information may render the offer non-responsive and exclude the offer from further consideration for award. Any offer may be rejected if it is unreasonable as to price in the NCAC's opinion. The vendor may be asked to provide additional information to establish the reasonableness of any price proposed. The lowest, reasonably priced, technically responsive offer will receive the maximum number of evaluation points, 150, based on the Total Price for Evaluation Purposes submitted on the Rate Response Form. Other, higher priced, offers shall receive a proportional number of points for price as outlined below.

5. BEST AND FINAL OFFER. The NCAC reserves the right to request clarifications and request a best and final offer (BAFO) from each prospective vendor within the competitive range. However, the NCAC reserves the right to make award based exclusively on the submitted proposals without seeking a BAFO.

6. SCORING METHODOLOGY.

- a. Non-Price Technical Qualifications: Proposals will be evaluated on non-price technical criteria as follows. Each member of the evaluation committee will independently enter a scaled rating (1-5) for each factor outlined in Paragraph 3 above. The scaled rating will then be multiplied by the weight to produce a weighted score for each factor. The weighted scores of all non-price factors will then be summed to provide a total weighted technical score for each proposal. Finally, the total weighted technical scores of all evaluators will be averaged to determine a final technical score for each proposal. The highest number of technical points attainable is 350.
- b. Upon completion of the technical evaluation, discussions or requests for clarifications (without divulging competitors' pricing, or standing) may be conducted with all qualified submitters or with those who fall into a clearly defined competitive range. The NCAC will ensure that the opportunity to clarify, confirm, or otherwise respond to questions is provided to all potential vendors under consideration for award.

7. EVALUATION AND AWARD

- a. Vendors determined to be reasonably eligible for award by the evaluation process may be offered the opportunity to discuss their proposals with a representative of the NCAC or evaluation committee, either directly or in writing. This process will be sufficiently formal to ensure equity and will be fully documented.
- b. Upon receipt of clarifications, the evaluation committee may adjust scores, if necessary, to reflect any new information. Should it be necessary, as a result of additional information obtained during this clarification process, to amend the RFP, a written amendment may be issued.
- c. Price: Price shall not be disclosed to the members of the evaluation committee until the technical evaluation process is completed.
- d. The maximum number of points allowable for price shall be given to the responsive, responsible proposal with the lowest reasonable price. (For purposes of this RFP, this number is 150.)
- e. Final Score and Award: The Price score will be added to the committee's technical evaluation score for each proposal to produce the final score and rank order of the vendors. Award may then be made to the vendor with the highest total score.



Rate Response Form

Please complete this Rate Response Form and submit it with your proposal.

Enter the number of hours required for the completion of all the Service Requirements of this RFP, and then enter the hourly rate of those service hours, and the extended price. The extended price shall be the firm fixed price contract amount for the ensuing professional services contract.

IMPORTANT: Pricing must be provided for every line item on the Rate Response Form, including unit prices and extended prices. Failure to provide pricing for any line items may render the proposal non-responsive.

All required for the delivery of products and services detailed in this RFP, including but not limited to:

Description of Services	# Hours	\$ Hour	Extended
Detailed project plan including timelines, milestones, scheduling, and strategy for meetings and reviews			
Clearly defined web strategy to be used NCAC for the redesign project and to ensure consistency after the site has been launched			
Three initial visual design concepts (minimum) based on identified Information Architecture, Navigation and Branding Strategies			
Graphic design templates for homepage and all subsequent subpages including icons, color palettes, images, and other design elements			
Web Governance and Metrics Strategies for the Sitka Campus			
Sitka Campus Branding Style Guide			
Site map detailing content and organization			
During the new site build, coordination of the site launch and post-launch review and revisions			
Writing web optimized content training including content audit strategy and evaluating writing samples			

TOTAL PRICE



Request for Proposal Website and Social Media Strategy

I. Overview

NCAC is the recognized leader for collaborative support and sustainability of career academies nationally and is seeking a support service partner to provide a redesign of our website, www.NCACINC.com to better serve our existing constituents and attract and engage new constituents. NCAC is a registered 501 c (3) non-profit.

NCAC also is seeking a support service partner to develop a comprehensive social media strategy.

II. Organization Profile

The National Career Academy Coalition was established as a non-profit organization sixteen years ago. The purpose of the organization is to support the growth and development of Career Academies in High Schools across the United States.

What Are Career Academies?

Career academies are small, personalized learning communities within a high school that select a subset of students and teachers for a two-, three-, or four-year span. Students enter the academy through a voluntary process by choosing the theme of the academy that is of most interest. A career academy involves teachers from different subjects working together as a team. Staff teams, who often share common planning time, work together to implement the key features of the model and provide students with exposure to the career field. Students are grouped together for several periods every day with a core group of teachers. This promotes a family-like atmosphere and results in close student-teacher ties.

A career academy includes the following essential elements:

- A small learning community
- A college-prep curriculum with a career theme
- Partnerships with employers, the community, and higher education

By design, these three central elements of a career academy lead to a school that is rigorous, relevant, and relational.

The mission of the NCAC is to be an umbrella organization that advises schools and school districts on best-practice for creating an academy structure, assists in the implementation of career academies by providing professional development and coaching, as well as an advocate for the Career Academy Model nationally, regionally and locally. Our main competitive point of difference lies in our

stewardship of the National Standards of Practice (NSOP), which is recognized as the evaluative tool used to measure the success of Career Academy implementation. Also, the NCAC holds an annual conference that is widely held as the Premiere Career Academy Conference in the United States.

Brand Promise:

As stewards of the National Standards of Practice, NCAC connects me to a national network of informed, innovative leaders and organizations that share this strategic vision for transforming teaching and learning. Belonging to this passionate community inspires and supports me to become a confident and creative leader in my academy's pursuit of excellence.

III. Intended Audiences:

There is a wide variety of audiences who will utilize our website. The challenge is to develop a site that is simple and user friendly to all, yet still technically appealing and interesting

Key Audiences (in order of import)

- High School District Superintendents/Assistant Superintendents
- School Principals
- Career Academy Leaders
- State Education Leaders
- Other Career Academy Organizations
- Teachers
- Chambers of Commerce
- Workforce Development Agencies Local, State and National
- Businesses
- Post-Secondary Institutions

IV. Competition

The marketplace is inundated with non-profits who play in the Career Academy/CTE space. Below is a list of those entities and their websites:

- AAIS*-American Alliance for Innovative Schools www.aais.us
- ACTE-Association for Career & Technical Education www.acteonline.org
- BIE – Buck Institute for Education www.bie.org
- CASN – Career Academy Support Network www.casn.berkeley.edu
- CECS - Capture Educational Consulting Services www.capture-education.com
- Connect ED - www.connectedcalifornia.org
- CPA* – California Partnership Academies casn.berkeley.edu/cpa.php
- CSSR – Center for Secondary School Redesign www.cssr.us
- Education Northwest www.educationnorthwest.org

- Ford PAS www.fordpas.org
- NAF – National Academy Foundation www.naf.org
- NCEE – National Center on Education and The Economy www.ncee.org
- SREB – Southern Regional Education Board www.sreb.org
- High Schools that Work www.sreb.org
- Talent Development www.tdschools.org

The variety of sophistication is very wide within this group. While some websites are much better than others, we clearly have the opportunity to position the NCAC as a National Thought-Leadership Organization with a savvy design and excellent functionality.

V. Our Redesigned Website

Easy navigation and quick access to information is essential to offering a great online impression. www.ncacinc.com needs to be redesigned in such a way that is both visually appealing yet offers the user quick access to the information they are looking for. The homepage should be simple and offer interesting visuals that rotate each time the page is refreshed. The site should features easy drop down menus which allow the user to quickly access the information they are seeking without having to click on several buttons to get to the information. We would also like the ability to feature student stories and teacher experiences on a rotating basis.

The design of the NCAC site must incorporate the Brand Promise in every aspect as well as illustrate our brand personality. We need to stand out in the space, but present a sophisticated tone and feel. We are the experts and have persistently advocated for students so they can be prepared for college career and life. We are the one organization that really is the knowledge leader in career academies. We are smart and confident professionals, but are never stuffy. We are vibrant, energetic supporters of the Career Academy Model.

VI. Technical Requirements

NCAC's Marketing consultant, DK Brand Strategy will work closely with the selected vendor and an ad-hoc board committee throughout the entire rebuild process to assist in the overall construction, navigation and content design.

- The NCAC has been without a social media/ web design partner for some time. The selected service provider will need to research the current web site parameters and develop a recommendation for a platform moving forward, including the url.
- We will also need assistance in researching/developing appropriate social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and other.

- The website will need to have a sophisticated admin site from which the Marketing Department can easily update content, add pages and monitor site stats and analytics.

VII. Project Goals

Goals of the website redesign project have been identified as the following:

- a. Develop stronger, unified, and consistent branding across all aspects of the NCAC website
- b. Develop stronger, more intuitive and clearly organized site navigation
- c. Improve content organization, copy, and content styles
- d. Refresh graphic design
- e. Develop a website using responsive design for mobile devices
- f. Create a new visual design based on navigation and site architecture which meets the identified needs, and incorporates as many of the identified preferences as feasible
- g. Create and incorporate unobtrusive design elements to provide internal, topic oriented promotion of services, programs, events, and activities of interest to the primary audiences
- h. Provision for independent maintenance of most website content by staff with minimal web skills
- i. Improve search engine ranking, findability, website performance, and site usage
- j. Leverage popular social media networking sites to foster communication and engagement
- k. Develop content strategy to ensure updated, valuable content across sites and platforms
- l. Ensure scalable architecture for ease of growth, maintenance, and change over time
- m. Regularly measure success and test improvements

VIII. Project Scope

The following project specifications outline the NCAC website redesign requirements. Proposals for the website redesign project should include or account for, but not be limited to, the following:

- Website Project Plan
 - Provide a website project plan for developing the NCAC website drawing on best practices for websites, industry standards, and benchmarks. Project plan should take into consideration NCAC's strategic messages, primary audiences, and technical, design, and content requirements. Vendor will work with NCAC staff and DK Brand Strategy to determine project tasks, assignments and dependencies including timeline. Two-day onsite planning session is expected for this step.
- Web Governance and Metrics Strategies

- NCAC will develop and finalize a Web Governance Strategy including web policies, writing style guides and web content management processes.
 - The service provider will identify key metrics and conversion goals for measuring successes and weaknesses, including traffic across all social media platforms.
 - Vendor will provide ongoing guidance as questions or issues arise during the term of the ensuing contract.
- Content Strategy
 - The service provider will work with NCAC to produce a Site Map detailing the content, along with the basic organization of the content. Vendor will provide NCAC with a two-day onsite training focused on best practices for web-optimized copy, including a content auditing strategy and evaluating writing samples.
- Information Architecture Strategy
 - The service provider will assist the NCAC with the development and finalization of the Information Architecture and Navigation for the new website. Vendor will provide ongoing guidance as questions or issues arise.
- Brand Consistency
 - NCAC through DK Brand Strategy will finalize the various aspects of the brand, including image, voice, colors, imagery, etc. – in a way that distinguishes NCAC. Vendor will provide ongoing guidance as questions or issues arise.
- Visual Website Design
 - Vendor will produce several visual design compositions representing the NCAC to-be homepage and representative interior pages based on finalized Information Architecture, Navigation and Branding Strategies.
 - It is expected that several rounds of revisions will be required based on iterative design testing and NCAC feedback.
- Template Development
 - Vendor will be responsible for the source design files of the finalized Visual Design and develop the HTML, CSS and JavaScript required for the page structure and styling of the new design templates.
- Site Creation
 - The vendor will build out the new templates in the CMS, constructing a library of templates that the content authors and administrators will be able to use when building out new pages in the website, including the development of responsive design for accommodation of mobile devices.
- Content Creation Support and Population of New Website

- Population of the new website will be done in large part by the NCAC, with contracted work to be considered outside of this proposal. New Website Completion Review
- Vendor will guide completion review including all programming, configuration and testing of web site, content types, templates, workflows, rules, taxonomy, content re-usage, and forms for the NCAC website.
- Technical Specifications
 - Page designs and templates shall exhibit good separation of content, presentation, and behavioral enhancements in accordance with current web design best practices
 - Layout should support responsive design and HTML 5.
 - Page designs and templates shall use proper descriptive/semantic markup to provide structural meaning; use of CSS signatures and microformats are encouraged
 - Style sheets shall include print styles to appropriately style essential content on all page and template-designs when rendered on paged media
 - Page designs and templates should take full advantage of the capabilities of modern browsers, should render fast load times on HTML and degrade gracefully on legacy platforms and web-enabled devices with limited capabilities; however, proprietary/non-standard code should be avoided
 - Colors should be specified in Hexadecimal notation
 - Layout should be flexible, with no fixed bottom and no horizontal-scrolling at screen sizes of 800 x 600 and greater with normal text size, and should take into account users with larger monitors; hybrid (fluid-elastic) designs are preferred
 - Designs should permit users to increase the text size to a minimum of 300% of normal without breaking layouts
 - External script files and style sheets are preferred
 - Pages print optimized to use full printable size of page with appropriate print logo and no unnecessary navigation printed
 - Pages and templates optimized for site performance; usable on slow speed connections
 - Does not use Adobe Flash to deliver content

IX. Deliverables-Web and Social Media

a. Vendor will Produce:

- i. Detailed project plan including timelines, milestones, scheduling, and strategy for meetings and reviews
- ii. Three initial visual design concepts (minimum) based on identified Information Architecture, Navigation and Branding Strategies

- iii. Graphic design templates for homepage and all subsequent subpages including icons, color palettes, images, and other design elements
- b. Vendor will Provide Guidance:
 - i. Web Governance and Metrics Strategies
 - ii. Branding Style Guide for Web and Social Media
 - iii. Site map detailing content and organization
 - iv. During the new site build, coordination of the site launch and post-launch review and revisions
- c. Vendor will Provide Training:
 - i. Writing web optimized content training including content audit strategy and evaluating writing samples

X. Design & Branding Specifications

The NCAC is undergoing a brand strategy update process. As part of this process, new architecture has been designed for the organization. DK Brand Strategy will work directly with the selected vendor to develop a comprehensive design that complements the new brand architecture including image, tone and brand promise.

XI. Budget

Budget: \$40,000 net inclusive of travel

XII. Expectations

(Please address all of these in your proposal)

NCAC expects its selected vendor to provide the following services:

- Work closely with NCAC executives and DK Brand Strategy to translate the NCAC brand into a redesigned and restructured website that is user- friendly and takes all audiences into account
- Expertise on content reorganization, use of social media, and SEO (search engine optimization)
- Develop and adhere to a detailed production schedule
- Dedicate project manager to work with on all phases and will offer continued support after the build is complete

XIII. Additional Questions

Agency Overview Questions

- Please provide a brief overview of your company history and philosophy.
- Describe what you consider to be your strongest competitive advantage.
- What do you feel makes for a successful client/vendor relationship?
- As a company, what are you passionate about?

Client-Related Questions

- Please provide a current client list, including at least two client references.
- Please list some clients with whom you have had a long-term relationship, and why the relationship has been successful.
- How long, on average, does a client work with your company?
- Do you have any clients that may pose a conflict to managing the NCAC account?

Account Team-Related Questions

- Describe your team structure and how resources would be allocated to this project.
- Please provide brief bios for the team members you would assign to this project; identify the project team leader.
- What is your firm's process for choosing members on an account team?
- Who would be responsible for managing timelines and budgets?
- How do you handle staff turnover on an account, and what role do you typically want/allow clients to play this process?
- How are new account team members brought up to speed on the account?

Technical Questions

- Describe your firm's technical capabilities.
- What software and/or platform will you use to develop the website and social media management?

Industry Experience-Related Questions

- Describe your familiarity with the education and non-profit industry. What are some of your successes?
- If you have not worked with a company in the educational industry, describe your experience and successes with companies in the retail industry.
- What have been some of your biggest challenges in website development for educational non-profits?
- Describe a successful integration of social media and website. Describe an unsuccessful integration.

Budget-Related Questions

- Please provide a brief overview of your approach to project scope, project management and expenses.
- How do you bill for services?
- Please provide your monthly fee structure.

- Please provide hourly rates for the various team members you anticipate will support the account.
- What is your markup, if any, for project-managing other service vendors and/or for out-of-pocket expenses?
- How do you define Return on Investment? How do you derive ROI from social media initiatives?