Listed below are vendor questions that were received and their corresponding answers to RFB# AA14-RH-4875 – Contract: Marketing, Communications and Advertising Services for the College of Nursing

Vendors are required to utilize the information contained in this Addendum.

Failure to include information in this Addendum is grounds for rejection of their response by the University.

Due to the timing and the nature of these questions the bid opening date will remain as originally scheduled – November 13, 2013 @ 1:00 pm.

Special Note: On page 7 under “Fees”, specification has been revised to read:

“The tentative budget for this engagement is not to exceed $50,000, including fees and productions for marketing costs and not to exceed $75,000 for the advertising costs.”

Question # 1: Can companies from outside the USA apply for this? (from India or Canada)

Answer # 1: Yes

Question # 2: Do companies need to come to the Amherst, MA location for meetings?

Answer # 2: Yes, if possible. Virtual meetings are also a possibility.

Question # 3: Can we perform the tasks (related to the RFB) outside USA? (from India or Canada)

Answer # 3: Yes, as long as you have an understanding of the population of the Western Massachusetts area and are able to evaluate and report on your efforts in that area. Some tasks may require onsite activities that could possibly be subcontracted.

Question # 4: Can we submit our proposals via e-mail?

Answer # 4: On page 1 and again on page 18 of the RFB it states that “No electronic bids will be accepted”.

On page 17 of the RFB under the heading: Bid Opening Time and Date it states:

“Bidders shall deliver two (2) copies and one (1) electronic copy in its entirety including all requested samples and/or supporting documentation as required in the bid specifications to the following address by November 13, 2013 at 1:00 pm EST at which time the bids will be opening and publically read”.

The one (1) electronic copy that is referred to needs to be a CD.
Question # 5: The project Deliverables and Performance Measures as denoted on page 6 of the RFB seem in conflict with the objectives. The deliverables appear to be more recommendations and strategy driven vs. an actual implementation and roll-out plan. Can you please clarify this for us?

Answer # 5: We are looking for proposal that includes a detailed proposed implementation, roll-out plan and proposed outcomes that would be realistic and achievable given the budget available.

Question # 6: In addition to the research the contractor is to conduct as part of the Scope of Work, is there existing research on the University of Massachusetts School of Nursing (re: demographics, enrollment rate, etc.) that will help to inform our work should we be engaged by the University?

Answer # 6: We have demographic information on those persons who apply to and are enrolled in our programs. However, this does not include demographic information, preferred venues for obtaining information, media habits, etc. for target audiences in the Western Massachusetts, Massachusetts and greater New England area.

Question # 7: Regarding the $50,000 budget on page 7 of the RFB, it states that: “The tentative budget for this engagement is not to exceed $50,000, including fees and production”. Can you please clarify accordingly

Answer # 7: The statement on the top of page 7, under fees, with regard to the budget should read as follows:

- The tentative budget for this engagement is $125,000 (not to exceed $50,000 for marketing, fees and production with an additional $75,000 for advertising costs in the first year).

a. Is this budget inclusive of all of the deliverables noted on the top of page 6?

Answer # 7a: The $50,000 cap includes all costs for deliverables on the top of page 6 as well as the costs and services listed on page 5.

- Web Based Marketing Services
- Market Research and Analysis Services
- Integrated Marketing Services.
- Other direct costs

b. What “production” costs are you referring to? Printing? Radio ad production?

Answer # 7b: Production costs refer to all media proposed such as print, radio, TV, etc. and are included in the $50,000 “Marketing” budget for the current year. Production costs would include the cost of ad development, design work, photography, filming, recording, script development, editing, etc.

Question # 8: Additionally, regarding the budget: On page 7, it also states: “Include a separate estimated cost for advertising for each media proposed”. What do you anticipate being a part of this separate estimated cost for advertising? And does it include the production costs referenced above?

Answer # 8: As noted above under question #7, $75,000 will be devoted to first year advertising costs such as print, radio, TV, etc.
Question # 9: Additionally, regarding the budget: On page 5 under Other Direct Costs, it states: “Other direct costs (ODC’s) are items that directly support the services being contracted. ODC’s may be handled in house or through subcontracting that is necessary to complete a project. ODC’s cannot be purchased under this contract as a standalone item or service.

By way of example, space may need to be rented for producing radio ads. This ODC “directly supports the services being contracted” and thus could be included as part of the budget accordingly to the first sentence. It is a “standalone” service that needs to be purchased, yet the rest of the sentence indicated otherwise.

Please clarify.

Answer # 9: Other direct costs must be provided by the vendor holding this contract with the University of Massachusetts as part of this contract, or provided by another entity subcontracted by that vendor as part of the overall budget of this project.

The statement “ODC’s cannot be purchased under this contract as a standalone item or service” refers to additional services related to the fulfillment of the obligations of this contract such as recording space rental. Those additional services must be included in this contractual agreement as part of the overall budget rather than additional contracts by and between by the University of Massachusetts and another third party.

Question # 10: What role will the University of Massachusetts’ Marketing Department play in supporting and sustaining the marketing effort?

Answer # 10: The University of Massachusetts Marketing Department will play an advisory and consultative role in the overall plan. Their approval must be obtained for use of University Logo and other such proprietary branding.

Question # 11: Regarding electronic submission on page 1 of the RFB, it says “No electronic bids will be accepted.” On page 6 under Submission Requirements it says that we should: prepare two (2) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy of your proposal and work samples”. Is this electronic copy to be on a CD?

Answer # 11: Yes, the one (1) electronic copy needs to be on a CD.

Question # 12: Regarding your target audience: you are looking primarily at Western Massachusetts but, are you also interested in targeting the entire state and/or region?

Answer # 12: The geographical target is Western Massachusetts, with expected collateral advantage achieved Commonwealth-wide. The target audience is primarily students wanting to become nurses, Registered Nurses who wish to advance their careers and healthcare providers who wish to develop or re-engineer the skills of their workforce. (Overview, Section II, top of page 3)

Question # 13: At the top of page 3 under Overview, the RFB states: “Proposals should include a marketing/communication strategy….”. Are you looking for a lengthy and in-depth plan? How much weight is given to this plan (in the proposal)? I inquire because the Deliverables as listed at the top of page 6 indicated a marketing/communications strategy (by way of integrated marketing plan, detailed project plan, launch/rollout recommendations), etc.
Answer #13: The strategy to meet the overall objectives of the RFB will be given considerable weight. Each vendor should include their strategy to deliver the intended messages to the target audience, based upon their experience, to achieve the best outcome. Proposals should outline the intended strategies as well as ways to measure success. A more detailed plan with timelines would be developed as one of the deliverables under the awarded contract.

Question #14: Is there an admissions budget and communications process that is separate from this marketing effort that encompasses admissions activity such as viewbooks/brochures, direct mail, outreach to high school students, presence at college fairs, etc? (I want to confirm that we do not need to plan or administer an admissions communications flow within this marketing budget)

Answer #14: Yes. There is a separate admissions budget that covers admissions activities such as viewbooks/brochures, direct mail, outreach to high school students, presence at college fairs, etc. There is an expectation that the overall marketing effort developed by this vendor awarded this contract would impact, drive and influence the measurement of the admissions process.

Question #15: Does the College of Nursing have admissions goals for each of its programs that we should be aware of?

Answer #15: We do currently have admissions targets for each program. However, specific growth targets will be determined in conjunction with the projections of realistic outcomes given the proposed plan.

Question #16: On page 6 of the RFB it mentions leveraging past research where appropriate. What existing research does the College of Nursing and the University have (that would be relevant to this program)?

Answer #16: There are a number of data reports regarding our applicants, students, programs, faculty, enrollment and graduation rates, etc. These would be made available to the contracted vendor.

Question #17: Have the services requested in this RFB been outsourced before? If so, who has been contracted to perform these services (incumbent agency) and what is your current relationship with this vendor(s)?

Answer #17: Marketing services such as those outlined in this RFB have not been provided for the University of Massachusetts – Amherst, College of Nursing in the past.

Question #18: Beyond posting to the statewide bid system, what additional agencies has this RFB been directly solicited to?

Answer #18: The University of Massachusetts engages in the open bid process. All bids are posted on-line and open to any vendor to bid upon that meets the qualifications and specifications set forth in the RFB.

Question #19: When is the last time this type of project has been completed?

Answer #19: Marketing services such as those outlined in this RFB have not been provided for the University of Massachusetts – Amherst, College of Nursing in the past.
Question # 20: What is the primary reason for taking on this project now?

Answer # 20: Under the direction of our new Dean, Stephen Cavanagh, the College of Nursing at UMass Amherst is looking at expanding our programs and growing the College.

Question # 21: What competitor materials appeal to UMass Amherst and why?

Answer # 21: This is a new direction for us and we are open to creative, innovative proposals.

Question # 22: Please describe the nature of that research, e.g., audiences, topics covered, quantitative or qualitative, and how the information was/is used. Were you pleased with the results of that research? Will it be available for used by the selected firm?

Answer # 22: This is our first request for proposals of this nature.

Question # 23: What other research has been conducted in the past 3-5 years? For example; internal audiences (faculty, staff, administration, current students, parents of current students), external audiences (prospective students, guidance counselors, media, legislators, key stakeholders/influencers), NSSE, ASQ, Tuition Pricing, Student Satisfaction, Non-matriculant?

Answer # 23: We regularly conduct student and alumni satisfaction and achievement data, we hold open houses for prospective and their students that provide us with additional information regarding market demand and preferences, hold open houses at schools and community colleges that will be shared with our contracted vendor.

Question # 24: We assume that current and prospective students as well as alumni may be among the audiences for the research portion of the subject. Will UMass Amherst be able to provide a sampling for discussion groups? Will faculty and other internal stakeholders participate in discussion groups?

Answer # 24: Yes, we will be able to provide names of interested students, alumni, as well as faculty and other stakeholders that will be willing to participate in discussion groups will be provided to the contracted vendor.

Question # 25: Please explain the role the selected agency is expected to play in regards to financing the placement of media to support the marketing plan.

Answer # 25: See the answer to question #7 with regard to the $75,000 allocated to advertising.

Question # 26: Should photo and services be estimated as part of this project?

Answer # 26: Yes, please estimate photography and other services based upon your experience.