**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**ADMISSIONS RECRUITMENT PACKAGE**



RFP17-007

Proposals Due: June 1, 2016

Missouri Western State University

4525 Downs Drive

St. Joseph, MO 64507

Dated May 23, 2016

**Background:** Missouri Western State University is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The University offers associate, baccalaureate and graduate degrees, as well as certificate and graduate certificate programs and has an enrollment of approximately 5,800 students.

**Scope of Services:** Missouri Western State University seeks a qualified vendor to generate academically pre-qualified undergraduate students and parent interest in support of their enrollment objectives.

The selected vendor must have a proven direct marketing track record of orchestrating large scale student search, application and inquiry generation marketing campaigns. This track record should include the ability to demonstrate a significant and positive return on Missouri Western’s investment, as well as “highest in the industry” rates of student response.

A year-round Search campaign strategy utilizing multiple list sources must be deployed by the vendor to generate the greatest interest with students as soon as they become available. In addition, a year-long Fulfillment of Search responders must be included, which immediately engages students and their parents and then cultivates those relationships throughout the academic year.

The selected vendor must have a proven track record and expertise in understanding the national landscape and the competitive factors affecting student recruitment and demonstrate this understanding through informed marketing strategies while producing desirable enrollment revenue, academic quality and diversity outcomes.

The selected vendor will be able to provide a turnkey operation to include strategic and creative development, production timeline management and quality assurance, print and mailshop production, email deliverability and response tracking, Web development and response site hosting, data synchronization and security, and routine monitoring and analysis services.

The campaigns will need to include high school seniors, juniors and sophomores and their parents. The vendor will advise Missouri Western on appropriate list usage, targeting parameters and criteria, and optimum deployment timeframes. Targeting strategy must provide considerations for the following:

* Maximization of market penetration
* Identification of new market opportunities
* Optimized targeting to consider
  + Net tuition revenue and ROI
  + Academic profile
  + Geographic diversity
  + Ethnic and cultural diversity
  + Gender equity

At a minimum, contact quantities are to include 35,000 sophomores and juniors and 25,000 seniors.

Missouri Western requires a simultaneous and multi-touch direct mail and email campaign, and mobile optimized Web response sites that optimize student and parent engagement while positively conveying Missouri Western’s graphic identity and key marketing recruitment messages.

Initial outbound marketing and any resulting direct mail and electronic fulfillment to responders are critical components of Missouri Western’s marketing program, and must be personalized, timely and effectively delivered to maximize interest and engagement. The vendor must demonstrate email deliverability expertise and provide strategic recommendations to ensure maximum inbox delivery.

The vendor must demonstrate the ability to collect parent contact information (including but not limited to the parent’s email address) for the majority of applicants and search responders, and then appropriately capitalize on the parent data collection. Strategically designed and informative email messages should be sent to parents, when parent email addresses are available.

The vendor must be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program and recommended strategies at the point of initial response and engagement through to enrollment.

For future consideration, the ideal partner would have the capacity to:

1. Develop a strategic approach to Financial Aid Optimization that incorporates setting a financial aid policy, building an award model and remaining engaged with Missouri Western throughout the recruitment cycle to exceed revenue, recruitment and enrollment goals.
2. Develop and deploy an Affordability Marketing campaign that allows Missouri Western to demonstrate their commitment to affordability as well as to assist students and families in their navigation of the financial aid process.
3. Develop and deploy a college decision campaign encouraging Missouri Western students to RSVP for a New Student Registration program. If students are undecided or have decided not to attend Missouri Western, they should be given the opportunity to share their reasons in the form of a survey to provide the institution with valuable market-level data.

**Strategic and Creative Services will include the following:**

1. Selected vendor will provide the following strategic services: audience identification/targeting, list source and timing recommendations, and list order placement services.
2. Selected vendor will provide the following creative services: copywriting, graphic design and Web design.
3. Selected vendor will provide a web application to be hosted on Missouri Western’s website
4. Selected vendor will develop a persistent, multi-channel marketing campaign, including personalized direct mail, email and Web response sites for students and parents. Web response sites must be optimized for mobile media (smartphones and tablets) based on browser identification. Each Vendor should demonstrate the benefits of its recommended methodology in its proposal.
5. Communications should be tailored to specific audiences as the vendor recommends where appropriate. Vendor should outline this recommendation for Missouri Western and receive authorization to implement strategy.
6. All creative must reflect Missouri Western’s brand identity and meet Missouri Western’s approval prior to each campaign launch. The size and quality of envelopes, letterhead, and reply forms will need to meet standards as set by Missouri Western.
7. Testing of new strategies is desirable for ongoing refinement. Strategic direction as well as multiple A/B split tests using print and electronic approaches will be provided by the vendor.
8. Selected vendor will provide a secure site for the electronic transfer of completion documentation for the student’s application, such as transcripts, secondary school reports and references from high school guidance counselors.

**Production Services will include the following:**

1. Selected vendor must be prepared to work directly with various list providers, and acquire the list data immediately upon release of new student information from each identified list source. All materials (electronic and paper) must be programmed and pre-produced in preparation for immediate distribution.
2. Complete on-line production and deployment – including personalized e-mail production, transmission, list synchronization and response tracking.
3. Letters and response forms will be personalized. The student’s name, home address, high school, indicated academic interests and first source coding will be considered as part of this personalization.
4. Students must be able to respond by mail or online, and the vendor must be able to differentiate methodology of each student’s response. Missouri Western considers someone a responder when the paper reply form is received in the mail for fulfillment processing, or when the student progresses to the Web response site on their mobile or desktop device after a successful user authentication. Email openers are not considered responders.
5. Personalized online Web response/inquiry forms will be designed, developed, securely hosted and maintained by the vendor.
6. An online Web application for admission to be hosted on Missouri Western’s website will be designed, developed and maintained by the vendor.
7. Responders and their parents should receive electronic fulfillment communications immediately (within one hour) following the response as an inquiry.
8. The vendor will provide coordination of mail campaigns which would include complete production, including printing, laser personalization, mailing for maximum USPS discounts and quality control.

**Data Services will include the following:**

1. Capacity to receive and clean up mailing lists and remove duplicate names from multiple sources (including Missouri Western’s inquiry and applicant files).
2. Must be able to securely send and receive data using PGP keys and FTP encryption.
3. Selected vendor must be able to secure all information in accordance with privacy and anti-theft regulations.

**Results Monitoring and Analysis will include the following:**

1. Selected vendor will provide real time market analysis throughout each campaign in order to make recommendations to improve results.
2. Detailed response analysis, to include list source, gender, ethnicity, geography, etc, with recommendations for changes, will be provided by selected vendor.
3. Ongoing analysis and recommendations for improvement – based on Missouri Western’s results and national research findings.
4. The vendor must deliver a robust, real-time online reporting portal which provides ongoing, on-demand analytics to Missouri Western; including metrics on response, audience and student information.

**Project Timeline:** Admission Recruitment process will begin July 1, 2016 upon awarding the vendor.

**Submission of Proposal**: The Respondent must respond to this RFP by submitting all required information in order for the proposal to be evaluated and considered for award. Failure to submit such information may cause disqualification of proposal from further consideration for award. **The University reserves the right to declare a proposal as non-responsive if an Applicant fails to respond properly to any part of this RFP.**

Proposals must be signed and sealed in mailing envelopes with the Respondent’s name and address clearly written on the outside. The Request for Proposal Number **(RFP17-007)** shall also be clearly marked on the outside of the envelope or package. The completed Request for Proposal Page (Cover Sheet) as well as the Pricing Sheet shall be incorporated into the Respondent’s proposal and shall be signed in ink by an authorized officer of the company. All costs incurred by the Respondent in replying to this RFP shall be borne by the Respondent. **Proposals are to be mailed or hand delivered to Missouri Western State University, Purchasing Department, Room 221, 4525 Downs Drive, St. Joseph MO 64507, prior to 2:00 p.m. CDT, Wednesday, June 1, 2016.**

**RFP Questions:** RFP questions and/or requests for clarification should be submitted via email to the Purchasing Manager, Kelly Sloan at [purchase@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:purchase@missouriwestern.edu). All questions and/or clarifications can be sent at any time regarding this RFP to the Purchasing Department until the end of business on Thursday, May 26, 2016 at noon. Questions received after this date may not be answered.

**Submission Materials:**

Respondent shall submit an **original document, plus two (2) copies for a total of three (3) hard copy documents.** ELECTRONIC AND/OR FAXED COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

The following items should be mailed to MWSU by June 1, 2016 by 2:00pm.

* Invitation to Bid Page: Complete the required vendor contact information for RFP17-007.
* Introduction: Briefly introduce your company, indicating whether the company is local, regional, national or international. Provide a profile of the company including, but not limited to, the approximate number of professional staff employed. Indicate the name of the person(s) who will be authorized to make representation for and to bind the company, their titles, addresses and phone numbers. Include prior experience with higher education search is preferred.
* References (3).
* Pricing: Include the pricing page to provide a quick glance of your proposal pricing, found on page 7 of this document.
* Company’s W-9.
* Addendum: Include any addendums for verification of receipt.

**Evaluation:** The award of the contract resulting from this Request for Proposal shall be awarded in response to written proposals based on the best and lowest cost. Each proposal will be evaluated using a subjective review of the information presented by the vendor to ascertain which proposal provides all required services and is most advantageous to Missouri Western State University. The University will award this contract based on the following evaluation categories:

Cost

Higher education experience

Applicant History and References

The University reserves the right to reject any and all bids received in response to this RFP and to waive any minor irregularity or informality.

**Costs:** Missouri Western requires all vendors to complete the pricing sheet (page 7).

**Notes:** Please provide specific notes/explanations regarding your work if necessary.



**PRICING SHEET**

**RFP17-007**

Bid Amount : $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Authorized Vendor Signature:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_