

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Contract for Statewide Awareness Campaign

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges is requested to approve a contract not to exceed \$1 million for a statewide awareness campaign.

Strategic Plan Reference:

Theme: Student Interest and Access

Goal: Increase the percentage of North Carolinians, particularly within underserved populations, pursuing and easily accessing education or training through North Carolina community colleges

- Objective 1.1: Improve the understanding and perceived value of educational opportunities, including lifelong learning, offered by NC community colleges.
 - o 1.1.1: Implement a comprehensive, systemwide marketing and communications plan that focuses on the value of community colleges and promotes the image of the System and our institutions.
- Objective 1.2: Increase student interest and success in industries experiencing skills gaps.
 - o 1.2.1: Market the value of technical education and workforce training for jobs/careers.

Background: To assist in North Carolina’s economic recovery, the NC Community College System seeks to launch a new statewide awareness campaign about educational opportunities and job-training programs at the 58 community colleges. Many North Carolinians have lost their jobs during the pandemic and need to retool. Community colleges can offer short-term courses and certificate and degree programs that quickly and affordably lead students to sustainable jobs. The colleges are uniquely positioned to help the unemployed retrain for new careers and move along a path of economic mobility. A comprehensive awareness campaign would be conducted through various platforms in the fall of 2020, in order to enroll students in short-term training and spring classes. The effort would be targeted to students who have been displaced due to COVID and to unemployed North Carolinians searching for “pandemic-proof” jobs.

Rationale: The System is experienced in running statewide awareness campaigns, having conducted three such efforts as part of the Your Hire Education campaign since the summer of 2019. Working with a marketing firm, we could launch this campaign quickly and run it through the end of 2020. The campaign would cost approximately \$1 million in order to effectively communicate a sustained message over several months across the state.

The NC Community College System office received approval and funding from Office of State Budget and Management from COVID recovery funds set aside in the Continuity of Operations fund.

The System Office has sought a Request for Quotation to develop and implement a campaign. The scope of work includes development of a strategic marketing plan targeted to several different audiences, including underserved communities; recommendations for placement of advertising across a range of media; redesign of the Your Hire Education website to match current economic conditions; and placement of ads.

Method of Procurement: Section 1.7 of Session Law 2020-97 allows State departments, institutions, and agencies subject to Article 3 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes to obtain in the open market necessary supplies, materials, equipment, printing or services to address the COVID-19 pandemic, including purchases that exceed benchmarks established in G.S. 143-53.1 without the approval of the Department of Administration. A report on these expenditures shall be made a matter of record, and if the expenditure exceeds the benchmark, a report must be made to DOA's Division of Purchase and Contract. This provision applies to all contracts entered into between September 4, 2020 and December 30, 2020.

Contract Amount and Time Period: The contract is for the period through December 30, 2020 and shall not exceed \$1 million.

Fund Source and Availability: Funding is available through the COVID-19 coronavirus relief funds (CRF) transferred to the NC Community College System from the Office of State Budget and Management from Session Law 2020-32.

Contact Person:

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