Questions & Answers

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1. CMS / Platform

Q1:   Could you please confirm whether WordPress is an acceptable CMS for this project, provided it meets all the accessibility, security, and non-technical user requirements outlined in the RFP?

Q9:   Do you have a preference for a CMS?

Q12:   What is your current CMS? What are some of the reasons you are looking to leave that CMS?

Q16:   What CMS platforms have you evaluated recently, and do you have a preference for one already?

Q22:   Many of the questions will be based on the final CMS. Do you have a preferred CMS? Our plan is usually to meet with the team, understand their goals and then recommend a CMS specific to their team and policies. All three that we would recommend will meet your requirements, but their documentation may be different. Do you have guidance on how you would like a response?

Q31:   What are the current CMS pain points that you are trying to solve with a new CMS?

Q32:   Are there any CMS solutions you've researched already that you are interested in for this project?

Q33:   Do you a preference on an open-source CMS solution (i.e. WordPress or Drupal) or proprietary CMS solution (i.e. Modern Campus)?

Q34:   Are there any CMS solutions you will not consider for this project?

Q49:   CMS – Are you considering moving to a new CMS and why?

Q50:   CMS - Have you demoed any CMS solutions over the last 12 months? If so, which ones.

Q51:   CMS - Do you have a preference for open source or proprietary CMS solutions?

Q64:   What CMS do you currently use? What are the pain points with the current CMS/website?

Q65:   Do you have a preference for the CMS platform (e.g. open-source, proprietary)?

Q95:   Which current website pain points must be prioritized for improvement?

Q113:   Please confirm your current CMS.

Q114:   What challenges are you currently facing with your CMS?

Q115:   Does NBCS have a preference for OpenSource or proprietary platforms?

Q120:   Are you open to specific CMS recommendations (open source vs. proprietary), or do you have a preferred platform today?

Q132:   What problems are we trying to solve? What obstacles must we overcome?

RESPONSE: 1. CMS / Platform

WordPress is not preferred due to security risks. If WordPress meets all the requirements in the RFP, including accessibility, security, and non-technical requirements, then yes it can be an acceptable CMS for our project.

There is not a preference for a CMS, however, it needs to be user-friendly and not based on coding.

Proteus (proteus.co) is our current CMS provider. The NSCS is looking for a new CMS provider because Proteus is exiting the business.

They can either put forward their top recommendation or all three with the questions answered.

Pain points – searchable policy manual, electronic documents, accessibility compliance. Searchable policy manual is a priority.

No we have not researched CMS platforms.

2. Hosting / Infrastructure

Q13:   Who currently hosts your website(s)? Are you looking to have the vendor provide hosting services for your website?

Q29:   Is a hosting package with guaranteed SLA required? This can be offered, but may be cost-prohibitive. What is a standard uptime that your team requires?

Q61:   Hosting – If hosting is part of the scope for this response, please provide the following for the web server:

- Current CPUs:
- RAM GB:
- Disk GB:
- Data Transfer / Bandwidth GB:
- Operating System – Windows or Linux?

Q71: Please provide the following insights so we can recommend an appropriate cloud hosting package.

- Anticipated Uptime Guarantee
- Average Pageviews per month
- Average Visits per month
- Data storage
- Concurrent user sessions
- Page load time
- Peak period traffic
- Do you require a Web Application Firewall (WAF)?
- How are you sending emails from your website?
- Will you be leveraging SSO? Which IdP / does it support SAML?
- Do you have specific requirements for HTTPS/SSL?
- Will you be connecting your CMS(s) to any internal systems behind firewalls?

Q84: Will the selected vendor be responsible for hosting the production environment, or will NSCS provide state-managed hosting? (If vendor-hosted, are there requirements related to uptime SLAs, hosting architecture, or geographic data residency?)

Q88: Hosting & Infrastructure: Does NSCS prefer vendor-managed cloud hosting or on-premises hosting, and what is the minimum SLA uptime expectation (e.g., 99.9% vs. 99.99%)?

Q135: Are there pain points with the current CMS or hosting vendor that you want to make sure we solve? How are you currently hosting your site?

RESPONSE: 2. Hosting / Infrastructure

Proteus also provides hosting services for our website, currently. Yes, we expect the vendor to provide hosting services or contract with a partner to provide hosting services that meet the requirements laid out in the RFP.

Guaranteed SLA is preferred and will be taken into consideration, but we will look at all proposals.

Current statistics are not available due to issues with G4.

Required – web application firewall(WAF)

Don't know how emails are sent from the website

No Single Sign On (SSO)

HTTPS is required.

No internal systems connected to CMS.

Must be hosted in the United States (see Project Overview #5)

Prefer 99.* for uptime.

3. Team / Training

Q2:   Team - How is the website team structured? What are they responsible for? How many individuals?

Q3:   How do you manage website updates? Is this centrally managed through a core team or do you designate access to certain sections of the site to departments or individuals?

Q4:   How many team members will need training and what is their technical level?

Q15:   How many individuals at NSCS will need to use the CMS?

Q25:   How many concurrent users will there be using the system at peak?

Q68:   How many staff members will need to be trained?

Q106:   How many staff members will require CMS training?

Q107:   Do you require on-site training, remote training?

Q144:   How many staff will need training on the CMS, and what level of technical expertise do they currently have?

RESPONSE: 3. Team / Training

Currently, there is a team of one to manage all aspects of the website. Going forward, the goal is to have additional individuals assist in creating and updating content on the website.

Currently, website updates are centrally managed by one individual. In the transition to the new CMS, the ability to designate access to certain sections of the website to individuals will be needed.

A minimum of five individuals will need training. Their technical level goes from low to high understanding, but they are not proficient in coding.

On-site and remote training are both acceptable.

4. Budget / Cost

Q11:   What is your established budget for this project? How would you divide that budget between the redesign and the ongoing CMS costs?

Q19:   What is the estimated budget for this project? Alternatively, is there a not-to-exceed amount or a defined budget range? If possible, please break down the budget by allocation for redesign efforts versus CMS procurement and ongoing maintenance costs.

Q26:   Do you have an established budget for this project?

Q30:   BUDGET: Do you have an estimated budget or budget range allocated for this project?

Q47:   Budget - In order to better evaluate scope requirements, please provide approved budget or budget range for this project (new CMS, Hosting, Web)

Q62:   Can you share the budget for this project?

Q109:   What is the budget allocated for this project?

Q127:   Is the project funded? If so, are you able to share a budget target or range?

Q136:   What is your anticipated budget for the new site and ongoing hosting services?

RESPONSE: 4. Budget / Cost

The RFP process is our tool to get the best possible price for the project and we will not share the budget amount. We are System that values affordability.

Separating out the redesign, implementation, and ongoing hosting costs is expected.

5. Timeline / Project Management

Q10: What is your timeline for wanting to have this project completed and new site launched?

- What is driving the dates of this project?
- What happens if you miss any or all of the dates of this project?

Q35: PROJECT TIMELINE: The RFP specifies a desired project start December 1, 2025 but does not indicate a target launch or completion date. Is there a desired or mandatory launch date in mind?

Q43: What are your expectations for launching the new website, in terms of a target date?

Q48: Timeline – What is your anticipated timeline for the project? Do you have a hard deadline for launching the new site?

Q70: Do you have a target timeline and/or launch date for the new website?

Q108: What is your preferred project execution approach ? - Onsite, Onshore, Offshore, Hybrid

Q118: Are there blackout periods for content freezes, stakeholder availability, or go-live (e.g., Board meetings, legislative sessions)?

Q119: What target go-live window are you aiming for in 2026?

Q123: What is the desired launch timing for the new site?

Q151: How often do you want to refresh the design (e.g., mid-contract facelift at 3 years)?

RESPONSE: 5. Timeline / Project Management

It would be ideal to launch the new site in the Summer 2026, but are flexible if it reduces costs.

Refresh at 2-3 years.

Project execution can be a hybrid of onsite and onshore. Any offshore must comply with the RFP requirements.

There will be black out time periods around board meetings. Usually for a two to three week period.

6. Content / Migration / Copy

Q5:   Forms - is there a requirement to connect forms to outside tools, systems or databases?

Q7:   Assets - do you have a library of images or video assets?

Q8:   Assets - do you have a content team who will be responsible for providing updated content for the new website?

Q20:   For your forms, do you have a secure third-party forms builder? How are the forms built now?

Q21:   Is the policy manual an application that currently exists outside of the current website or will it need to be rebuilt?

Q38:   Can you provide more information around the task "Provide content optimization and recommendations." Will the selected partner need to create new content for the site? Providing copyediting? For all pages or just some?

Q39:   Do you currently use a form builder? And if you do, what is it and do you expect to continue using it?

Q40:   Can you provide all URL(s) that are in scope for this project?

Q54:   Content Development - Will the chosen vendor be responsible for writing new content or copyediting existing website content? If so, in order to provide an accurate quote, how many pages of content should the chosen vendor plan to:

- Copywrite (provide new content):
- Copy edit existing content:

Q56:   Content migration – Please provide estimated number of pages to be migrated

Q57:   How are you managing your current faculty/staff directory? With the redesign, will the directory stay as-is? Or, will it be managed within the CMS?

Q58:   How are you managing the calendar on your current website? With the redesign, will the calendar stay as-is? Or, will it be managed within the CMS?

Q69:   How much content will be migrated?

Q72:   How many distinct websites are included in the redesign project? (Is this a single site for NSCS, or does the scope include individual sites for Chadron State, Peru State, and Wayne State?)

Q73:   What is the estimated total volume of content across all sites? (Please provide an approximate page count and any high-volume content categories such as news, board materials, or audit reports.)

Q74:   What role will NSCS staff play in the content migration process? (Will internal teams assist with editing or population, or is the vendor expected to handle all aspects of migration, including rewriting, formatting, and cleanup?)

Q83:   What is the current method for handling form submissions, and what are the workflow and data storage requirements going forward? (For example, are submissions sent via email, stored in a database, or pushed to a CRM?)

Q86:   Policy Manual Format: Is NSCS open to transitioning policies from PDF into structured HTML/database entries for improved search and accessibility, or should vendors plan on maintaining PDFs alongside new formats?

Q87:   Forms Functionality: For complex forms (e.g., Joint Enrollment, Vehicle Reservation), should these be rebuilt natively in the CMS with conditional logic, or integrated with existing third-party systems already in use?

Q91:   Templates & Content Migration: The RFP references multiple templates (home, colleges, interior, landing pages, etc.). Does NSCS want a one-to-one recreation of these templates, or would consolidation into fewer, more flexible templates be preferable?

Q92:   Content Strategy vs. Migration: Beyond migrating existing content, should vendors assume responsibility for content strategy, rewriting, and SEO optimization, or will NSCS handle those internally?

Q94:   In section IV, bullet point #4, considering that the new structure will not align 1:1 with that of the current site, do you have a sense or a preference for how you and/or the vendor will create any new content that might be needed?

Q98:   Approximately how many pages, PDFs, forms, and media assets must be migrated

Q99:   For policies currently in PDF format, should they all be converted to HTML, or will some remain as PDFs

Q102:   Should content migration include rewriting/optimizing text, or only transferring as it is?

Q105:   For forms, do you want them fully rebuilt or embedded from existing systems?

Q122:   Please specify the number pages and types of content to be migrated

Q126:   Do you have writers on staff? Do you need help with content writing and/or governance?

Q130:   Do you have an intranet and/or portal for current students? Is that in the scope of this redesign?

Q131:   How many pages are in the current site?

Q133:   How much of your website is internal for employees and how much is for an external audience? Is there a need/interest for an intranet to put information for internal employees?

Q138:   Do you have existing video or photography assets to use on this site or should this response include creation?

RESPONSE: 6. Content / Migration / Copy

At this point, the forms do not connect to outside tools, but allow for CSV downloads of responses. It also emails responses to particular individuals based on selections made.

The NSCS will work with the chosen vendor to update content for the new website. Please note that some information cannot be changed (Past Board Materials). And must remain housed on the website.

The NSCS has a library of images and video assets and works with the State Colleges to update these assets.

The URL is https://www.nscs.edu/

This a single site for NSCS. It does not include the individual sites for Chadron State, Peru State, and Wayne State.

No third-party form-builder

There will be some content creation – mostly tweaking current copy. Expect more copyediting.

We have around 200 pages and expect them all to be migrated over.

High-volume content categories include board materials and past board materials, audit reports, policy manual, and news.

I don't know how many PDF/document – there are a lot.

The staff directory is currently managed in the CMS. We 16 staff members at the NSCS.

Calendar is managed by the CMS.

Content migration – most to all will be handled by the organization that wins the bid.

Policy Manual – we are open to transitioning policies to a new searchable format. It is currently PDF housed inside the CMS. It will need to be rebuilt.

Currently, forms are build by Proteus and responses are emailed to the appropriate person at NSCS/Colleges. I also have the ability to export a CSV of form responses. Forms do not connect to a CRM.

Yes, all forms will need to be rebuilt in the new CMS.

Templates – open to ideas on templates and what will work best for the new site.

Content Strategy – mostly migration (board agendas) and rewriting/SEO optimization on main pages by company.

We would take recommendations on best practices on website structure and will work with the chosen company.

There is no intranet/portal included in the scope of the project.

All of it is for public information, even though there are sections that are employee-focused; the NSCS must comply with the public information statutes of Nebraska.

We have one person who manages the website, writes content, manages assets. We will need assistance with writing and governance.

Yes, we have video and photography assets.

7. Design / Branding / User Experience

Q6: Design & Branding - will you provide updated brand guidelines or is the expectation that this project may influence an update to the brand?

Q42: Can Nebraska State College System provide 3 example websites with design, features and/or elements that you like?

Q76: Does NSCS have existing brand guidelines or design systems the new website should align with? (If so, will these be shared as part of the discovery process, or should the vendor propose a refreshed visual system?)

Q77: Is there a primary audience the new site should be optimized for? (While students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the public are all mentioned, is one group prioritized for UX decisions?)

Q78: Are there peer or competitor websites NSCS admires or would like the vendor to consider for design inspiration?

Q125: Will web guidelines for the brand be provided to the winning bidder?

Q128: Can you provide examples of higher education websites or even those outside of higher ed that you aspire to / favor and why?

Q137: Are there competitor websites that you hold in high regard for design and functionality?

Q139: Are there upcoming initiatives (enrollment campaigns, capital projects, presidential searches) that may require prominent placement or microsites?

Q140: How often do you anticipate presidential/chancellor searches (special sections), and should we design reusable templates?

RESPONSE: 7. Design / Branding / User Experience

The NSCS went through a rebrand about eight years ago and has a branding guide. However, the project can influence the brand on certain levels. The branding guide will be provided.

I don't have current examples.

Public is prioritized.

The NSCS has ongoing initiatives that run periodically that require prominent placement or microsites like the presidential searches, our Free-Application promotion (every fall), Economic Impact, Nebraska SMART

I expect another presidential search in the near future as Chadron has an Interim President. Having templates for special sections will be vital.

8. Integrations / 3rd Party Systems

Q45:   What is the level of integration that 3rd party systems require? Do these all have an embed or API?

Q59:   Would you please elaborate on the legacy databases being used and any 3rd party services that will need to be integrated into the site? Please note if these are external links to 3rd party sites or if they will need to be integrated into the new website.

Q67:   Do you require any other integrations with third-party tools/platforms?

Q81:   With what third-party systems or platforms must the new website integrate? (Examples mentioned include Tableau, PowerBI, YouTube, and Google Maps. Please clarify if others like SIS, CRM, or event tools are involved.)

Q145:   Are there any integrations not mentioned in the RFP (CRM, HR/payroll, student systems) that may be future requirements?

Q146:   Do the forms on the current site integrate with a CRM? If so, will that integration need to be set up again for the forms on the new site?

RESPONSE: 8. Integrations / 3rd Party Systems

We use Tableau/PowerBI, YouTube, and Google Maps are integrated into the site.

No CRM or HR/payroll systems are integrated.

9. Analytics / SEO / Performance

Q24:   How many page views are there yearly across all the sites?

Q28:   What are average monthly pageviews for the site over the course of a year, understanding that may vary based on time of year.

Q44:   Current Marketing:

- Can you describe the SEO efforts taken on your site so far?
- What is your current SEO strategy?
- What level of SEO involvement do you expect/need? Consulting on SEO'ing currently used pages and/or recommendations to expand SEO targeting?
- What are your expectations for Google Analytics in terms of consulting and migration to the new site?
- Are you currently using Google Analytics to track data on your site? If not, which data tracker are you using?

Q60:   What are your expectations for Google Analytics in terms of consulting and migration to the new site?

- Have you implemented GA4?
- Do you need vendor to setup GA or will vendor be using existing setup?

Q96:   What is your expected site traffic (monthly visitors, peak loads, concurrent users)?

Q117:   Do you have baseline analytics (traffic, key funnels, conversions, search terms, device mix) we can use to set targets?

Q147:   What does a typical month look like in terms of visits, unique visitors, page views, etc.?

Q148:   What is the maximum number of unique visitors, visits that nscs.edu receives in a month?

Q150:   Do you expect the vendor to provide proactive recommendations (SEO, accessibility monitoring, UX improvements) beyond the initial launch?

RESPONSE: 9. Analytics / SEO / Performance

No SEO is used at this time, but will take best practices into consideration.

With the GA4 we experienced challenges and are no longer able to collect analytics. We expect the new site have analytics available.

Stats are unavailable.

Yes, we expect the chosen vendor to provide proactive recommendations on SEO, accessibility and UX beyond launch.

10. Accessibility / Security

Q17:   On page 7 of the RFP, item 8 includes several questions regarding security measures. Could you please clarify where in the proposal you would like vendors to address these questions? Section V – Proposal Requirements does not appear to specify a location for these responses.

Q37:   Is there a plan in place to ensure all PDFs on the site meet WCAG 2.1 accessibility requirements, or do you need the selected partner to help bring these documents into compliance?

Q85:   Does NSCS currently subscribe to accessibility and QA tools like SiteImprove, or should the vendor recommend and integrate such tools? (Also, should ongoing accessibility monitoring be part of the proposal?)

Q89:   Accessibility Tools: The RFP mentions SiteImprove and similar tools. Does NSCS expect continuity with its current accessibility toolset, or should vendors propose alternatives?

Q90:   Security & Authentication: Should the CMS integrate with NSCS's existing identity management (SSO/Active Directory), or is a standalone authentication system acceptable?

Q97:   Is the current website ADA, WCAG compliant? If not, are there known gaps?

Q100:   What are your specific requirements for MFA, SSO, or authentication integrations?

Q101:   How often should backups and security scans (malware, DDoS, penetration testing) be conducted?

RESPONSE: 10. Accessibility / Security

Appendix 1 for Accessibility Checklist.

Appendix 2 for Security Questionnaire

WCAG 2.1 accessibility requirements – selected partner will be responsible for compliance.

NSCS does not have SiteImprove.

Standalone authentication system acceptable – no SSO

Please provide backup and security scans best practices for your organization.

11.Stakeholder / Discovery / Research

Q36: Is there any need for stakeholder engagement (surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc) as part of the discovery process?

Q52: Has any research/discovery been completed on the website in the last 24 months?

Q53: Are you interested in completing qualitative or quantitative analysis to inform the designs and user experience as a part of the Website Redesign Project? Analysis items may include user focus groups, surveys, heatmaps, engagement review of the current site, audience-based navigation, and content review, and/or online user experience recordings.

Q55: Do you have a set of User/Audience Personas defined? Or would you like to include Audience Persona Strategy/Creation as part of the redesign discovery process?

Q66: Have you completed any previous discovery and/or UX research so far?

Q93: In section IV, in regards to bullet point #1, are you open to end user research as part of the discovery phase, and/or have you done any such work to date?

Q129: Who are recent competitors and/or comparator institutions?

Q141: Are you open to audience research beyond usability testing (surveys, stakeholder interviews) to ensure the new site meets user needs?

RESPONSE: 11. Stakeholder / Discovery / Research

No surveys, interviews, or focus groups are needed for this redesign. And no research has been conducted on the website in the past 24 months.

No personas have been defined. But they would be Member of the Public/Stakeholder, Faculty/Staff Member, Student. We are open to the creation of personas.

No previous discovery or UX research has been completed.

Competitors include other higher education institutions in Nebraska and surrounding states. Comparisons are the State Systems. Here is a list: https://nash.edu/member-systems/

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12. Governance / Workflow / Permissions

Q46: Is there an incumbent agency that provides site support? If so, what is the name of the incumbent agency?

Q79: How many CMS users will require access, and what level of permission controls are needed? (Should the CMS support tiered roles such as contributor, editor, approver, and publisher?)

Q80: Does NSCS require Single Sign-On (SSO) integration for administrative access? (If so, what authentication protocols are used—e.g., SAML, CAS, Shibboleth?)

Q103: Do you require workflow/approval features within the CMS (e.g., multi-level publishing)?

Q104: Other than content editors and administrator, are there any other user roles or logins involved in the system?

Q143: Do you envision a formal governance process for content updates (who approves, who posts), or will it be decentralized across departments? (May not be necessary at this juncture)

Q121: How many content authors, editors, and approvers will need accounts at launch? How many distinct roles/permission levels are required?

RESPONSE: 12. Governance / Workflow / Permissions

There is no incumbent agency.

5 users. Yes, there will be tiered roles (editors and administrators).

No SSO.

Workflows will be needed.

13. Technical / Platform Capabilities

Q14: How many developers do you have to work on templates, and other CMS-related development?

Q27: Does the current website platform have the capability to export data for migration to the new site? Or access to the current site database to query and export content?

Q41: Will you allow server-side includes?

Q82: What are the expectations for the on-site search functionality? (Should it support indexing of HTML and PDFs, filter by content type/date, and/or integrate with tools like Redis or Funnelback?)

Q96: What is your expected site traffic (monthly visitors, peak loads, concurrent users)?

Q149: What is the storage size of the current site in GB and would you expect the new site to be in that same range going forward?

RESPONSE: 13. Technical / Platform Capabilities

No developers on staff.

The current vendor will work with the new vendor to facilitate the migration.

Yes, will allow server-side includes.

Yes, index HTML and PDF, and filter by content type/date. Unsure about the tools.

No analytics.

Unknown on current site size. With redesign expectations, the new site is TBD.

14. References / KPIs / Vendor Eligibility

Q23:   If we do not have "two groups that recently stopped using your service" would recent launches suffice?

Q63:   Can a Canadian agency bid on and perform this work?

Q75:   Are there any specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will be used to measure the success of the redesigned website? (For example, increased applications, improved engagement, reduced bounce rate, etc.)

Q110:   We have extensive experience developing CMS platforms for various clients. However, due to confidentiality agreements, we are unable to share client contact details at this stage. If we are shortlisted for the next phase of evaluation, we will be able to provide these references. Would this be acceptable?

Q111:   We have experience building multiple CMS platforms for private entities and developed IT application for public companies. Does past experience with Education Institutions, public assistance entities, regional planning organizations, or organizations similar to NSCS related to CMS Development is mandatory to participate in this bid??

Q116:   Beyond the stated goals, what are the top 3 measurable outcomes you'll use to judge project success (e.g., specific Core Web Vitals thresholds, conversion targets, accessibility scores, user satisfaction)?

Q124:   What specific qualities are you looking for in an agency partner?

Q142:   How do you measure success today (analytics, inquiries, applications), and how should success be measured after launch?

RESPONSE: 14. References / KPIs / Vendor Eligibility

Recent launches work as well as long-term clients.

There are no restrictions on Canadian agencies performing the website work; however, the data centers must reside in the United States.

Yes, references can be supplied once the vendor selections are narrowed.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be determined and agreed upon by the prevailing vendor and the NSCS.

No experience in higher ed/public entities required.

Looking for an innovative partner with extensive knowledge and experience in building high quality websites and a high understanding of accessibility. Also prioritizes the timeline and budget.

15. RFP / Proposal Clarifications

Q18: In addition, could you clarify where responses to Section X – Vendor Questionnaire should be included

Q112: Could you confirm if any additional documents are required with the proposal besides those specified in the RFP?

RESPONSE: 15. RFP / Proposal Clarifications

Please title your response to the Vendor Questionnaire at the end of your proposal.

Please complete the Security responses in Appendix 02